The Black Cat

JULY 1908

The Golden Collar
$4000 Prize

The Impressionist

Stalwart's Fellow-Passengers

A Mountain Phillippe

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Wanted — A Homely Girl

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The Black Cat

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The Golden Collar.*

BY BRADLEY GILMAN.

NEARLY everybody who goes to Cairo visits the ostrich-farm, six miles outside the city; but not everybody learns the story of the great ostrich who wears the golden collar,—a story which is closely interwoven with that of the bright-eyed but deformed young Arab Yusuf, who keeps watch from the central tower overlooking the farm.

I would not have unearthed the story myself, had I not brought a letter of introduction to Mustapha Bey, the owner of the farm. Clever, taciturn Yusuf would simply have answered my questions, with smiling courtesy, perhaps even translating the Arabic inscription on the collar, but entering not at all into the dramatic details which were implied by it. I did indeed, notice, as I looked down from the tower, the gigantic form of the ostrich, and I asked, "Why is that big fellow kept alone in that pen? Is he dangerous?"

Yusuf replied, in broken English, with a dreamy smile on his brown face, "He good ostrich, Sais good ostrich, but people 'fraid." And he leaned over the railing and gazed at the great creature, with evident affection.

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After a moment's silence, he gave me a searching but kindly look, and asked, "Want Sais speak to you?"

"Yes," I answered, at a venture.

He uttered a peculiar cluck, and the ostrich, standing, as I judged, over six feet high, looked intently up at us; another cluck and a hissing sound from the dwarf, and the great bird made a few powerful strides half around his pen, then rose in a mighty leap, upborne by the spring of his powerful legs and by his black, glossy wings, and came over the seven-foot wall of sun-dried bricks, as if it had been a toy-fence. I caught my breath, involuntarily, at his amazing display of power, and my surprise deepened into alarm as Sais rounded the corner of the wooden tower, and came, half leaping and half flying, up the stairway toward us.

Yusuf suspected my fear, for he laid his thin, dark hand on my arm re-assuringly. "No 'fraid, no 'fraid," he said, with a quiet smile.

Up came the mighty creature, three stairs at a time; and I shrank behind the dwarf, and was ashamed. When Sais reached the platform, he towered above me and seemed like some pre-historic winged monster; his sinewy legs were a grayish pink, and seemed possessed of limitless strength; his long, pliant neck darted restlessly about, and his bright eyes scanned me with fearless curiosity. The dwarf reached up his arm and laid it affectionately upon the golden collar around the creature's neck, and with his other hand offered a piece of sugar. The two strange beings were evidently intimate friends, and I judged that the Arabic, in which Yusuf talked softly to him, was made up of endearing phrases.

I was not unwilling to have the interview close; and after Sais had skimmed swiftly down the stairway, making it creak as he passed, I thanked Yusuf, but knew that he received my hasty words with hidden mirth.

A week later, at the Khedivial Club in Cairo, over Turkish coffee and Egyptian cigarettes, I told Mustapha Bey about the incident. He was amused, and recounted to me the history of the collar.

"A sais, as you know," said he, sinking comfortably back upon his divan, "is the gaily-dressed man who runs in front of some of our native equipages; a sort of courier; of no particular use

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in these modern days, but I see that some of your European friends have adopted the custom."

He narrowed his eyes and looked at me quizzically over his tiny coffee-cup. "Sais, the ostrich, got that gold collar because of a famous race which he ran, — and won, — ten years ago, when we were putting in the railroad which passes near my farm."

Mustapha Bey was himself the active agent in the building of this railroad, and is still one of its directors.

"The story of the collar really begins, however, far back of that date; in fact, it began with the first lot of ostrich eggs which was imported into this region, nearly eighteen years ago. It was a venture of mine, and my friends said that it would not succeed. I feared as much, myself, when only one of the dozen hatched; that one, solitary, forlorn chick was Sais; we didn't call him 'Sais', then; he was simply 'The Chick,' or 'It'; and he staggered around in his pen for a few days, and seemed about as much inclined as was I to give up the experiment. But there was one other creature on the farm quite as feeble and forlorn as himself. That creature was the orphaned hunch-backed son of a Nile boatman, a boy of seven years, who managed to starve along on sugar-cane from the river-bank and wild-carrots from the fence corners. I never had noticed the boy until I saw him, one day, in the pen with the ostrich-chick. At sight of him I was on the point of ordering him whipped off the farm; but my keeper checked me. 'He is making the chick live,' said he; 'They love each other; the chick feeds from his hand.' And that was the fact; the homeless, deformed boy had somehow made friends with the feeble, homeless young ostrich; they slept together, huddled in a hollow of the sand, and the boy, — it was this same Yusuf, — chewed up carrots and fed the chick, and made him take hold of life. As soon as we saw Yusuf's success, we gave him rice and milk and anything he asked for; and the boy continued to prepare this food in his primitive but effective way."

Mustapha Bey was called out for a few moments, by Howe Pacha, an associate in the Khedive's Council, but soon returned, drank another cup of coffee, lighted another cigarette, and took up his story. "The two, Yusuf and the young ostrich, became inseparable; their loneliness and misery seemed to bring them

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into intimacy; the boy talked to the bird incessantly; and, although the ostrich is not usually a very intelligent creature, there is nothing like continuous intercourse with some one human being for developing, in bird or beast, such intellect as it may have. Yusuf protected the chick faithfully, and on one occasion saved it from a half-starved, roving cat, who had attacked it.

"The weeks and months passed, and the chick got a good grip on life, and grew rapidly. These birds reach their full strength at six years, and live to an age of twenty or twenty-five.

"I was encouraged by the health and strength of Yusuf's pet, and imported two more lots of eggs, both times with fair success; the young broods hatched, and most of the chicks lived; we had learned to leave the eggs exposed to the warm sun during the day, and to cover them slightly at night; in the spring-time that was quite enough. Yusuf's young charge, however, had a long start, and was fully grown before the other chicks had feathered out. The boy and the ostrich were always together; the boy had been cared for, as I had directed, and had grown in strength evenly with the ostrich; but his deformed spine could not be remedied, and his arms and legs have always been somewhat shrunken, probably because of a lack of nutrition in his early years. His inability to walk and run with ease may have led to the plan, but he presently had trained his pet to take him astride of his strong shoulders and, with wings slightly raised, to carry him about, as if on horseback. I was at first uneasy for the welfare of the bird, but, as both bird and boy seemed to enjoy it, I said nothing; and I often watched the pair with interest, as the strong creature sped in great circles, on the desert outside the farm, running at a rate far exceeding the capacity of the best horses in any Cairo stable."

Pausing to light a fresh cigarette, Mustapha Bey continued: "About that time I was giving less than my usual attention to my farm itself, because I was getting a land grant for the railroad. I had an English engineer with me, and the grant was finally obtained, and the laying of the track completed a mile beyond the farm, on the way to Fayoum. But there was much native prejudice against the new project, and several times short sections of the track were torn up at night, by fanatical Arabs.

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"At length the road was available for construction-trains, and we discharged fifty camels and their drivers, having no further need of their services, and these drivers fomented the opposition of the people as much as possible.

"One day we ran a train of three cars out of the Cairo shops, as far as my farm, and I had ordered a luncheon prepared for several important Sheiks, and had invited them to ride to the city in the cars. I was not at the farm, myself, that day, but learned the details of the affair, as I now relate them, from my Secretary, Abdul Aziz, who was on the spot.

"It was the season *Kourban-Bairan*, a Mohammedan festival much like your Christian festival of Christmas. At that season it is the Arab custom to eat mutton. Everybody eats it — the poor are provided with it — some of the more savage families tear a living sheep in pieces and devour the flesh raw. You have perhaps heard of the barbarous custom. This flesh-eating, in the case of men and women who have not eaten meat for a twelve-month, — together with the religious exaltation of the season, — often stimulates the nerves as if with 'moustic,' the local deadly alcoholic drink.

"Another characteristic of our people is the regarding of imbecile and insane persons as under the direct inspiration of Allah; and many crazy people go about at large, who, in your country, would be restrained in asylums. Such a man was present, that opening day, at the temporary railroad station, near the farm; he had caught the general spirit of native antagonism toward the new iron highway, and he had gorged himself with mutton. Carefully as we had planned the events of the day, we had not taken insane fanaticism into account; and it nearly wrecked our project, or might have delayed it for years. After the distrustful Sheiks had taken their places nervously in the cars, — being eloquently exhorted thereto by my faithful Abdul, — and he was about to signal the engineer, the train suddenly started without warning, and began to move from the station. The explanation was that the insane vagrant whom I have mentioned had climbed into the cab of the engine (while the fireman was oiling one of the bearings, outside), had pitched the engineer headlong to the ground, and had pulled the starting-lever."

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"Another cup of coffee!" I whispered to the turbaned, slippered waiter, as he noiselessly passed, and I motioned Mustapha Bey to continue.

"You see the significance of the situation," he suggested, with his inscrutable Egyptian eyes narrowing. "The fortunes of our costly experiment were hanging in the balance; our first load of passengers composed of leading Arab Chiefs, our train headed for Cairo and our new terminal station, and a crazy man seated alone and fanatically jubilant in the engine-cab. I am glad, on the whole, that I did not know what was doing until all was over, else I might have got a bad nervous shock; Allah Akbar!"

He bowed, gravely and devoutly, and continued: "There was much excitement,—so Abdul told me afterward,—as the crowd grasped the situation. Abdul confessed that he was nearly paralyzed with apprehension, and could not stir. The warning cries and gestures of the natives alarmed the Sheiks in the cars, and three of them, in one compartment, pushed open the door and leaped wildly out, luckily escaping injury, in the loose sand of the desert. Several Arabs, mounted on horses and dromedaries, started in eager, aimless pursuit of the train; but they could not overtake it."

My narrator had begun his story in a light and cheerful vein, but at this point as the memory of the eventful day grew upon him, his dark face became serious, and he instinctively drew the fold of his rich *schokha* about his shoulders, and readjusted his *tarboosh* upon his head. Gravely he continued, and fire came into his dark eyes as he spoke. "That was Yusuf's day and hour. Allah so willed it. Yusuf was among the crowd at the station, crouching comfortably on the shoulders of his great winged pet, like a 'Fellah' high up in the head of a date-palm. He saw the act of the insane man, he saw the train start, and he realized the momentous consequence involved; but he did not scream, nor waste time in idle brandishing of arms, like the other natives. He was a clever fellow, even then; and he knew, in that moment, that there was one possible chance of averting disaster; he knew that there was a side track, at Cairo, a few hundred yards outside the terminal station. If the rushing train could be thrown

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upon that side-track, it would exhaust its speed on the sharp up-grade of the hillside. But how could a message be carried? There was no telephone in those days, and our telegraph line was not in working order.

"There was one possible messenger,—swift-footed, swift-winged—it was the ostrich, Sais. That day the great creature's name came to him. Yusuf settled himself firmly on the strong shoulders, and hoarsely whispered the signal."

I was intensely interested in my friend's narration, yet interested also in noting the substratum of religious fervor which came out, more and more distinctly, as the narrator became absorbed in his story; underneath the smooth, world-trained railroad director and cabinet-adviser, lay the fatalist Moslem. "Sais was to run that day;" he said, solemnly. "It was so willed by Allah." And he bowed his head, and touched his breast with his hand.

"At Yusuf's signal, Sais darted forward; he knew not his errand, knew not his path; but his young master had whispered him to run, and he ran; yes, how he ran!"

A pause, and I filled it by mentally recalling the powerful action of the great creature's legs, as I had seen them bend and stiffen like tense, steel rods in the pen, when Sais had strode half around the enclosure and bounded over the seven-foot wall.

"There was a choice of paths, and Yusuf acted wisely. He guided Sais along the highway of plane trees, which is more direct than the long curve of the railway; then he cut across the orange-grove which you saw on your left, and leaped Sais over the wide ditch which carries Nile water to the fields near Metropolis; straight past the sycamore known as 'The Virgin Mary's Tree' and up the slope beyond, and he reached the railway, having saved a half mile. The train was nearly a mile ahead, and moving at what would be called extraordinary speed in this slow country, where even express trains attain only twenty-five miles an hour, as a maximum. Yusuf knew that the real struggle was to come along the track; and he was not sure about the ostrich's footing, over the ties; but Sais barely seemed to touch the ties or the ground; indeed, his wings supported half his weight and his rider's, and a false step, now and then, would not have proved fatal. The powerful creature was running eager-

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ly, joyously, with little apparent effort, yet with a swiftness which Yusuf had never before called out; the boy was half-terrified and half-fascinated, yet, under all, he was resolute to succeed in his purpose. Once, as Sais neared the train, and made a gigantic bound to clear a culvert, Yusuf clasped the creature's neck too tightly, and almost stopped his breath; a moment of faltering, but Sais caught his great stride, as the boy slackened his grasp.

"They drew up to the train, when it crossed the bridge over the Nile; they must pass it, but not yet; the daring lad spoke quiet words to his steed and checked him; over the ties of the bridge they flew, and crossed in safety. Then, on the broad enbankment beyond, Yusuf gave the signal, and Sais responded. The mighty creature here for the first time seemed to catch the idea of a race, of competition; before this he had run from sheer joy of free, swift action. Now they were abreast of the flying train and, with a scream of exultation, Sais put forth all his magnificent power; he ran with a lightness which gave Yusuf an easy seat; he passed car after car, from whose windows turbaned heads and swarthy, anxious faces protruded in wonder, and perhaps hope. On and on! The creature was speeding at a rate, probably, of fifty miles an hour; and the terrific pace carried him and his clinging rider past the cars one after another, as if they had been stationary.

"The white walls of Cairo were now plainly in view; not a half mile intervened between the engine, with its crazed occupant, and the new terminal station; but just ahead was a highway-crossing; and there lay a great peril; a train of heavily-laden donkeys was filing slowly across the track. Yusuf's heart almost failed him at the sight! Would they all cross in time, or would the excited ostrich swerve from his course? The lad, now almost exhausted, gave one encouraging cry to his winged steed and closed his eyes. Then he felt the great bird rise with a mighty bound. There was a pause, but in a second the powerful feet touched the ground again, and the danger was over—the donkey train had been cleared at one great leap.

"Now the switch was close at hand. The cries of the donkey-drivers had brought out the Arab switchman. He was an intel-

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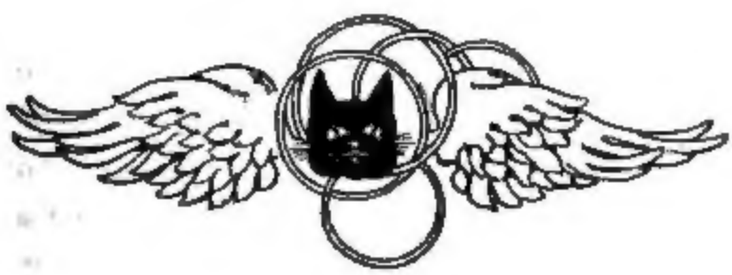
ligent fellow, and Yusuf's warning cry and gesture gave him his cue. Clang went the iron bar; and Yusuf heard it only faintly, as he clung to his noiseless steed, for he was a hundred yards beyond. But he knew that his wild task was accomplished; and he talked to Sais and checked him,—and fell, in a faint, to the ground, as an explosion and a crash sounded in his ears.

"The train had rushed across the switch upon the side-track. The crazy man in the cab was gesticulating wildly from the window. The engine dashed fifty yards up the slope of the siding, and plunged, with boiler exploding, into an empty house at the extreme end of the line."

Mustapha Bey paused, panting, almost as if he, and not Yusuf and Sais, had run the race. I waited, myself short of breath, for him to finish the tale. He drained his full cup and added, "That was the end, as Allah had willed it from the beginning. The engine was wrecked, and the cars were somewhat shaken; but not a passenger was seriously hurt. When the people attempted to lift unconscious Yusuf from the ground, Sais attacked them savagely; the lad lay there ten minutes, with the great bird striding excitedly around him. When Allah gave the lad back his senses, Sais rejoiced with great joy."

Another pause, and I asked, softly, "But the golden collar! What of that?"

Mustapha Bey seemed to come back to me and to the Khedivial Club room as if out of a mist and from afar. "The collar was given to Sais by our railroad company," he said. "The inscription is in Arabic, and reads, 'For him who runs to victory, with feet and wings.'"



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The Impressionist.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

E occupied a six-berth cabin in the steerage of a Blue Star liner, swinging northward from Cape Town on the road to London. The "we" comprised three South Africans, an Italian, and two Australians, and of the latter I was the least important. My countryman, Healy, at one time lieutenant in the Third Imperial Bushmen, attracted considerable attention.

Healy came aboard a few minutes before we steamed out of Table Bay, and the flat-topped mountain had hardly disappeared in the mist when the steerage passengers were aware of his vigorous personality. The bath steward was a "grafter," but Healy improved his morals by jerking him head foremost into a bath that the steward had prepared for a more generous passenger than the sun-tanned wanderer. The butter was rank, and Healy rounded off his complaint by jerking a pound of the stuff at the head of the purser and pursuing that astonished person through the dining saloon. We began to like Healy.

I liked his stories. They were pithy little stories — tabloids. There were no windy introductions — one gathered the details from the opening sentence and then sprang upon the climax. Before the unimaginative listener had time to ask a question, the story teller had started another. He could not stop reciting them. Day after day, as we churned up towards the line, he put them forth, unceasing. There was no braggadocio — he told them with the air of a penitent confessing his sins. He never mentioned the locale of a story, and when we asked he ignored our questions. His restless feet had trekked from Cape Town to Cairo and followed the breezes from the Indian Ocean overland till they reached the Atlantic.

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It was hot in that steerage. Sometimes, in the warm afternoons, we dozed while Healy was speaking, but he didn't care. Quite unconscious of our inattention he piled one narrative upon another till the tea bugle roused us from our slumbers. This disregard for us proved Healy's truthfulness — the liar always scrutinizes his audience.

"There's Wade," he murmured, one hot day, as the liner bit through a stretch of gleaming, oily water, "he was a snorter! Jim Wade," — he raised his voice slightly — "you died as you deserved to die."

The four others were asleep. The thin, whistling sound that came from the berth of one of the South Africans challenged the bass snore of the Italian.

Healy continued: "We struck an empty farmhouse one day — leastways we thought it was empty. Wade looked up the chimney. Then he jerked some rotten timber into the open fireplace and spilled a gallon of oil over it. The blaze came out of the top of the chimney, but what Wade saw couldn't get out that way. It dropped down and chased him with a scythe blade. That hound told us not to fire — said he wanted the chaser to get the breeze. We stood and watched them circle the house three times, Wade laughing, the thing behind a flamin' fire ball. It ran into the wall at last and dropped down with a little scream — it was a woman in man's togs."

The thin, vibrant noise made by the South African came through the thick air like a long needle that pricked one's brain. I was thinking of jerking a boot at the berth, when I noticed Healy. He was listening intently, his brow corrugated, his eyes glazed.

"They moaned like that," he whispered.

"Go to sleep," I said soothingly. I was sorry for Healy.

"You've heard of Gerlatz," he cried. "Old Sylvester?"

My imagination carried me up to the rubber region and waited ready to fill in the details of horrors that Healy omitted.

"We caught them on the side of a ravine," he muttered. "It was night — Gerlatz was behind them, they had to come on. Saw they were up against it, dropped their old Snider rifles and came over the ledge with their hands up high over their heads. Poor black swine."

The South African's snore rushed on to the high notes, and Healy stopped, staring out the porthole in the direction of Africa.

"It was dark till then," he continued after a slight pause, "but just as the first one climbed over the edge of that hole, God Almighty shoved a big moon right up out of the earth so as we could see that the poor devil had thrown away his gun. With his hands up in the air he looked as if he had the moon on his shoulders and was going to throw it at us fellows only a few yards away.

"When he went tumbling backwards down amongst the thorns, another took his place and another and another, each one of 'em standing up agin that big, astonished moon for just a minute before they went tumbling backwards. It looked as if God was showing us a thing and we wouldn't believe. The last few fought — I wish they all had. The moon climbed up higher and higher after that, like as if it wanted to get a good look at us. It stared at us the whole night through, and we cursed. I can see 'em now — nothing in their hands."

"You shouldn't think of it," I remarked, settling myself in the uncomfortable bunk.

Healy didn't answer. The nasal duel between the South African and the Italian continued. A shower of golden lances from the setting sun came through the porthole when we rolled, and the atmosphere was like a wet blanket, pressing one down upon the hard straw mattress.

I must have dozed. The tea bugle roused me, and I lay awake listening to the concluding sentence of a yarn that Healy was telling. He didn't know we were all asleep — for that matter he didn't care. I was sorry — when the mind takes an introspective turn and finds much stored up matter out of which it can build accusations, matters go wrong.

The evening before we sighted Teneriffe, the Italian raised an objection to Healy's stories. The mind of the sun-tanned giant was unusually fecund. He dragged out horrors in endless procession — bare, gaunt horrors, brought to life by the days of inaction and the fierce tropical heat. The Italian glanced nervously at Healy and mentioned the doctor.

Cruickshank laughed. "Nonsense," he said. "Let him go ahead, it eases his mind to tell them to us."

But the Italian cursed. The verbal tabloids were beginning to affect his nerves.

"Out there," said Healy, waving his hand westward, "we —"

"Out where?" interrupted Beere.

The story-teller was silent a minute, then went on, ignoring the questioner, who tried to find the locality of the incident that was under review in Healy's mind. "Out there we, Horwitz, Fenelon and I, went after four of them that had escaped. Got ahead of them and caught them as they were fording the Limperi above the big falls. We just pushed 'em off with long saplings and kept them drifting till the suck from the cataract caught their logs. Horwitz sang out 'goodbye' but they didn't hear. Water dropped a hundred feet — roar like —"

The Italian cursed. "You turn me cold," he cried, angrily.

Healy was excited, but we quieted him, and after a time he fell asleep.

Next day Teneriffe came up out of the ocean, a line of small, fat clouds hanging like a necklace round its bare breast. The heat was stifling. We churned slowly along till we were abreast of the pink, chrome and pale blue splashes that mark Santa Cruz.

We six from our cabin went ashore together, but in the confusion at the landing jetty we were separated from Healy, much to the delight of the Italian. Cruickshank had lived for a time at Santa Cruz, and he piloted us, omitting the disused bull-ring and the cathedral towards which the jabbering guides were hurrying their captures. And Cruickshank did know the town.

Near midnight we found Healy in a little wine bodega near the Plaza. He was acting peculiar, but he was not drunk. Sometimes one gets intoxicated in tropical places without drinking to excess. We rambled through the velvety night, through the narrow streets where the faint tinkling of guitars came to one like colored threads of sound twisted into the darkness. The angry Italian stalked in front; Healy was still resurrecting those horrors of the dark land that we had left behind.

Stumbling back to the jetty in the early morning, the wanderer was at my side.

"Night like this," he murmured, "we struck that crowd with old Gerlatz —"

"Oh, shut up," I cried angrily. Eight horrors a day for two weeks had my nerves in a bad state.

"'Twasn't our fault," he mumbled, "they—"

"Shut up," I yelled. I pushed him towards Cruickshank, and walking swiftly, I overtook the Italian.

The clattering winches were hauling up the last loads when we got aboard and tumbled lazily into our berths. Healy spoke like a man under the influence of a drug, and I determined to speak to the purser on the following day.

It must have been two hours later when I awoke. Healy was tapping me on the shoulder and pointing towards the porthole under which the Italian was slumbering peacefully. A big moon looked over the water line and threw a splash of silver right across the sea.

"What's up?" I asked sleepily.

Healy didn't answer. I rubbed my eyes and looked at him. He had his revolver levelled at the porthole.

"What is it?" I gasped.

"There they are," he murmured. "They've jerked their guns away, but we don't want prisoners."

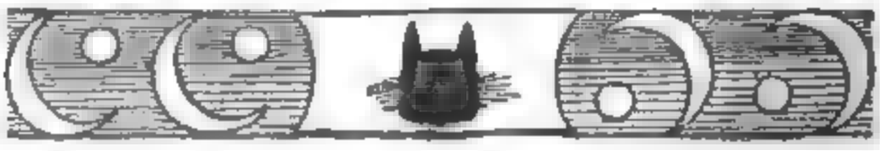
"Lay down, you fool," I cried. I glanced again at the porthole; a piece of rope hanging from the poop deck, swept backwards and forwards across the face of the moon.

"That's the second," yelled Healy, firing as the rope drifted by.

Cruickshank and I sprang at him, but he dodged and rushed up on the deck, firing wildly as he ran. We were moving, but the lights of Santa Cruz were still visible, and before we could intercept him he had sprung overboard and disappeared.

After an hour of fruitless searching, we thought of the Italian, whose bulky body was so close to the target at which the madman had fired. We rushed back to the cabin, but were reassured when we heard the heavy bass snore of the nervous one. The report of the revolver had not awakened him.

"No murders on his conscience," muttered Cruickshank. "Come up on deck, I still seem to hear him telling his weird yarns."



Baldwin's Fellow-Passengers.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.

THERE were eight in all, and their owner — a little, wrinkled, gray-eyed man — was evidently very proud of the birds, as he invited Baldwin into his state-room the fourth morning out, to watch them feeding.

"Yes, sir, they're carrier-pigeons," he explained, "and as soon as I reach New York I'm going to spring the trap. Maybe they won't hit the blue! Just maybe!" He wiped the grain dust from his hands, and smiled with delight.

Baldwin watched the birds as they eagerly pecked at the grain their owner had spilled for them, and after a bit realized that the little man meant to free the pigeons and let them attempt to find their way back across the Atlantic to England, where he had taken the steamer.

Then he expostulated. "Really, sir," he cried, "you don't mean to allow those birds to attempt to recross to England?"

The bird fancier took Baldwin by the coat sleeve in a conciliatory way. "My dear sir," he begged, "I trust you will not be so inconsiderate as to raise objections to my purpose. To be honest with you — and honesty is the rule of my life — I do propose that these carriers shall recross to England. And they can do it, sir — they can do it in perfect safety. They are splendid homers, and each shall carry one written word around its neck to my wife in Bath."

"*One* written word!" exclaimed Baldwin, thinking his travelling companion still more eccentric.

"One word, sir, one word each, which will make eight words in all. A sentence — a greeting to my wife. Ah! you understand me now, sir, you understand me now. A little token of affection between me and my wife."

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Baldwin did not understand at all, except that his point was being evaded, and so again expressed his disapproval of allowing the pigeons to be let loose. They would perish in the attempt to reach England, he asserted.

"Why, my dear sir," cried their owner, "the thing has been done scores of times. It is nothing for birds like these to cross the Atlantic, even in winter. They will make eighty miles an hour the whole distance — just hit a current in the air and slide there, as it were."

Now, Baldwin knew practically nothing of homing pigeons, except a vague idea of their swift flight and great endurance, and so he let the matter drop, wishing neither to do the little man an injustice nor show his own ignorance.

However, he decided that as soon as they should land in New York he would lay the matter before the superior knowledge and judgment of the S. P. C. A.

But he was saved that trouble. As Fire Island came in sight the door of the pigeon-cage, which was now on deck, became unlatched and the eight birds immediately took flight.

Their owner was the picture of despair. "They're gone!" he exclaimed, "Gone without any message! What will my wife think?"

"You had better cable her on landing," suggested Baldwin, and then he noted vaguely another point of weakness in his knowledge of homers, to which the bird fancier paid no attention. The pigeons, after circling once or twice in the air, laid a course directly toward the Long Island coast.

"I thank you for your advice — I *will* cable her," replied the little gray-eyed man, despondently, picking up the empty cage and casting it overboard; "but it will be a great disappointment to Agatha — a great disappointment!"

Amid the bustle of docking and baggage inspection, Baldwin lost sight of the owner of the pigeons, and thought no more about him until a day or two later, when struggling with the accumulation of business on his desk in Maiden Lane. Then, glancing through a crevice of the ground-glass door of his private office, he both saw and heard the little, wrinkled, gray-eyed man asking for the diamond buyer. The vague suspicions which he had en-

tertained now took definite shape, and he hastily scribbled a line to the manager, instructing him to urge the visitor to return the next day, but when he left to have a trusted clerk shadow him to his residence, no matter where it might be.

At four o'clock that afternoon the emissary reported that the man lived out on Long Island and had just returned from abroad with some fancy pigeons he had exhibited there. At six o'clock Baldwin's chauffeur was guiding his car through the eastern outskirts of Brooklyn, drawing up eventually near a handsome villa. One glance at a neat dove-cote on the grounds was enough for Baldwin, who briefly gave the order, "Home."

But that was the reason why a secret service man awaited a little, gray-eyed caller at Baldwin's diamond emporium in Maiden Lane on the morrow, and why the government grew richer to the value of several thousand dollars' worth of gems, brought ashore by Baldwin's feathered fellow-passengers of the *Ruritania*.

A Mountain Phillippa.*

BY ADELINE KNAPP.

VENIN', Sis; what's yer name?"

Ethel Ritchie had been long enough in the region to know that the tall, brown mountaineer was greeting her with courteous sincerity, according to his light, and she gave the desired information promptly. Her interlocutor regarded her with dull eyes, in which no interest was apparent.

"I reckon you're one o' them fotched-down ladies, from t'other side?" he said, at last.

"I live at the Settlement," was the reply, and he nodded.

"I 'lowed ye did. You've come a right smart piece, if you're aimin' to go back this evenin'."

"I am afraid so," Ethel said, anxiously. "The pony was frightened at something, and ran. I got off the road, and haven't been able to find it again."

He regarded the pony disapprovingly.

"They hain't airy thing in all this maountin to skeer at," he opined. "The nag's a plumb fool."

"I think so too," Ethel beamed; "but I'm afraid he was not alone in his folly.

Silence ensued for several moments, during which Ethel waited for the mountaineer to speak again, while he stood at ease, waiting, apparently, for nothing at all.

"Will you tell me how to get back to the Settlement?" she finally ventured, "It must be growing late."

"Hit air," was the response, given with conviction, "and hit looks pint blank like hit's goin' ter rain."

"Oh," Ethel leaned back in quick dismay, trying to see the sky, through the almost tropical luxuriance of the woodland foliage. A mountain storm was no light thing.

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"I shall have to hurry," she cried, "if only you will tell me the way to go."

The mountaineer laid a hand on the pony's mane.

"I hain't aimin' to fright ye none," he began, "but I wouldn't like ter start ye travellin' homeward now; for ye cayn't find the way."

"Is it so far?"

"Hit's a right smart piece; an' ye look plumb tuckered out, already."

It seemed to Ethel that she was more weary than she had ever before been; she had been several hours in the saddle, on hard mountain roads. Nevertheless, she felt that she must get home at once.

"Couldn't you guide me?" she asked, adding, quickly, "I should be so glad to make it worth while to you."

He hesitated, a dull brick red creeping up under the tan of his face, to his forehead.

"It'd be worth while anyhow, if I could," he said, "But hit's too fur to foot; we-all'd git cotched in the rain; an' I hain't got nary nag nor mule."

"What *shall* I do?" The question rose involuntarily, out of her dismay.

"I 'low Maw'd be right proud to welcome ye," he replied. The fine dignity of hospitality straightened his figure suddenly.

"Maw's seen some o' you-all," he added, answering the look of distress that deepened on her face. "She says you-all air the friendliest ladies she mighty nigh ever saw. She'll be proud to know ye."

There was no help for it. Ethel remembered the way by which she had come, fancying all the time that she was proceeding toward the Settlement. The pony had shied, and run, at the sound of a falling tree, in the depths of the forest, and before she had him quieted again they were traversing a path wholly new to her. She did not know where she had rounded the mountain, high on its shoulder, nor that the faithless little brute was making steadily for his old home, beyond the divide, in the next valley.

"Hit ain't a great piece off," the young man said. "Maw, she's Sally Ally Flower Clapp. I'm Jasper."

Ethel had heard the tradition of Sally Ally Flower Clapp, who had travelled on foot to the Settlement to propound a query. 'Lige Stockwell, over beyond Troublesome, had declared that the name of the country we-all lived into was Africa. Sally Ally Flower 'lowed, she said, that it might be Africa; but 'Lige Stockwell was nobody from Nowhere; an' never knowed nothin' when he got there; and she wasn't goin' ter swallow his say-so for nothin'; hence her journey.

She was deeply impressed when told that the name of her native land was America, and that she lived in the state of Kentucky, and she memorized the unfamiliar names with awed carefulness.

"I'm a sight glad you-uns as knows has come to teach us-uns as don't know," she said, in departing.

It would certainly be worth while, Ethel decided, to meet Mrs. Clapp. They would worry, at the Settlement, but that could not be helped, now. She told the mountaineer she would go with him.

The grim mountain, that had seemed so to menace her loneliness, grew human and lovely again, in the renewed sense of companionship. It was yet very early spring; the hemlocks and spruces were just putting out bright green tips; the oaks were golden, and the scent of laurel, and of magnolia, was in the air. Jasper Clapp did not speak during the next twenty minutes. He walked quietly before her, along the narrow bridle-path, his gun in the hollow of his arm, and the girl noted that he kept a sharp look-out as he went.

Presently the forest primeval thinned, to give breathing space to a perpendicular cornfield, flanked by a few tobacco plants. A thin blue curl of smoke showed, beyond, and three or four dogs suddenly dashed out of nowhere, vociferating about the pony. Jasper Clapp kicked them, impartially, and paused before a rough log cabin.

"Will ye 'light from your beastie?" he asked.

A tall, gaunt woman, smoking a corn-cob pipe, was already in the doorway, half a dozen faces peering out from behind her.

"Hit air one of the ladies from th' Settlemint, Maw," Jasper explained, and she came down the path.

"You air welcome," she drawled, with a slow dignity that

seemed, somehow, not incompatible with the slat-like figure and the corn-cob pipe. "'Light down an' come in."

Within the cabin the evening meal was preparing, in the great chimney's yawning cavern. The place swarmed with children, several half-grown boys, and what Ethel took for one girl. She smiled at the latter, who immediately ran out of doors.

"That there Tandy," his mother explained, "is skeered of his shadder," from which remark the teacher gathered that the child in the calico frock was also a boy.

In one corner, on a rough settle, she noted a little curled-up heap that seemed to breathe; and from its midst a single bright eye surveyed her; to vanish when she smiled at it.

"Is the baby sick?" she asked her hostess, now bent to the hospitable task of frying bacon. The odor from the fireplace made Ethel conscious of an elemental appetite.

"She's porely," Mrs. Clapp replied, shortly. It might have been the smoke from the fire that suddenly twisted her features into an expression of pain.

The storm burst in fury, just as the meal was served. It shook the cabin until its rude rafters creaked and its doors rattled; it could boast no windows. The rain beat down the chimney, hissing upon the fire. Without was a tumult of sound; the swishing of brush and corn, the lashing of tossed trees, the crash of nearing thunder.

One of the dogs howled from the doorstep — the others were already in the cabin, and as Jasper opened the door to admit him an awful flash of lightning illumined the room.

He shut the door quickly, with a muttered ejaculation. Tandy cowered against his mother's skirt, and from the little heap on the settle came a startled cry. Sally Ally Flower was beside the child at once.

"Hit hain't nothin' but the elements, Moppet," she said, in a tone of brooding tenderness. "Mommy's right here 'longside of ye, an' here's a bit o' nice bacon. Chaw on that, lovely one, an' don't be fearted none."

"Is the little one very sick?" Ethel asked Jasper Clapp as he served her with bacon and potatoes, hot corn bread and strong black coffee, sweetened with sorghum.

"She's porely," he replied, as his mother had done, and his face, too, took on that quick look of pain. Mrs. Clapp was back at the table, now, attending to the wants of the boys. One of these suddenly leaned forward, his mouth full of corn bread, and addressed the visitor.

"Does ye teach hit's round?" he demanded.

"Yes," Ethel said, and the discussion, familiar throughout the mountain, began, as to whether the earth is round, or flat.

"Hit's mighty interestin' to listen to ye tell about hit," Jasper said, judicially, when Ethel had explained her own position with regard to the question. "So long's I kin remember not to ferget hit hain't so."

"You, Jasper," his mother interrupted, "Where's your manners? Hain't ye larnt yet that they-all knows, an' we-all don't know? I 'low, Sis," she added, "you've bin to college?"

Glad to change the subject, Ethel told them of her school and college life; of her home, and her parents.

"Father is an Episcopal clergyman," she said, and a blank look settled upon the company.

"I hain't no scholar," Sally Ally Flower Clapp remarked, at last, "an' I hain't never larnt what that is."

"Oh—a preacher," was her comment, when Ethel had explained. "Why in yarth didn't ye say so?"

A moment later the girl felt a clutch at her sleeve. A hot, dry little hand fumbled her own, and she looked down, to encounter a drawn, white little face, from which a pair of big, beseeching eyes looked out and held her gaze.

"Did ye say yer pap follered preachin'?" an eager little voice demanded.

With a half humorous mental apology to her gentle, scholarly father, she assented.

"An' air you a child of God?" the voice persisted.

The beseeching eyes would not be denied; the hot little fevered hands clung and impelled. Ethel stooped and gathered the frail form into her lap, bending low over the tousled head, till the sudden lump in her throat would let her speak. Sally Ally Flower watched her like a lioness, ready to spring to the defense of her cub.

"She don't mean no insult," Jasper Clapp hastened to explain, She's only axin' ye hain't ye bin babtized."

"*Air* you a child of God?" The eagerness in the voice touched Ethel to a sense of her great unworth.

"I hope so, darling," she whispered, brokenly, "I long to be — yes, I've been baptized."

"I hain't," mourned the child. "I aim to be a child of God; but I cayn't, 'cos I hain't never bin babtized."

"She's crazy 'bout that," Mrs. Clapp said, in answer to the teacher's look. "She's gone on like that fer's much 's six months. They was a queer lady here, from outen the blue grass. She was proceedin' on sommers beyond; a deacon, she named herself, though she was a female. Gladys Imozel here, she's allers bin a right smart inclined to piousness, an' that there fotched in lady, she talked a heap to her, till she got her little heart plumb set on bein' babtized.".

"Babtism, wherein I become a member of Christ, an' a child of God," Gladys Imozel recited, eagerly, "She larnt hit to me, an' hit's true. They's somethin' else, too," she went on, gasping as she talked, "I feel it here." She laid a tiny, claw-like hand on her dress-front.

"I hain't a-goin' ter live long, I hain't; but seems like I cayn't die without I'm babtized an' become a child of God."

The words rose to a wail, and broke in a sob, that wrung the teacher's heart.

"You *are* God's child, darling," she murmured, "truly His child, if you believe in Him, and love Him."

"I do; I do," was the sobbing response, "An' I've axt 'em to lemme be babtized; but I hain't bin, an' I want hit so much! I want hit so much!"

"Is there no one to baptize her?" Ethel asked, pityingly. Sally Ally Flower was filling her corn-cob pipe — the others, save Tandy, were already smoking, having finished their meal.

"She hain't old enough," she pronounced, judiciously. "She air only five years old. Brother Maggard, he 'lows 'twould be wicked ter babtize 'er."

"Why?" Ethel showed her amazement.

"Babtism air fer adults," Sally Ally Flower explained, deftly

lighting her pipe from the one tallow candle that burned on the table. "Hit 'd be a pint blank sin ter babtize that baby. Brother Maggard 'lows he couldn't have it on his conscience nohow. She'll hafter wait."

"But I cayn't wait," wailed the baby; "I'm goin' ter die."

Her mother caught her quickly to her flat bosom.

"Naw ye hain't goin' ter die, blessin'," she cried, harshly; "You're goin' ter live, pretty one. Mommy cayn't have yer die. D'yer hear me?"

She turned, fiercely, to clearing away the supper things.

"Is Brother Maggard your minister?" Ethel asked of Jasper.

"He's the powerfulest preacher in the hull maountains," was the proud reply. "He wouldn't never do nothin' so undoctrineal as to babtize a infant."

"Oh; but she understands; she believes; does that make no difference?"

"Hit hain't right," Jasper pronounced, seriously. "Hit's a solemn thing ter meddle with a immortal soul that away."

Before Ethel could reply the little Gladys Imozel was seized with a terrible fit of coughing. The air in the cabin was thick with smoke and steam; the odor of cooked bacon, and the breath of dogs and humans. She carried the tiny sufferer to the door, which she opened a little way. The soft, outer air was delicious, and after a moment the child seemed easier, but Jasper stepped quickly forward and drew the two inside again.

"The storm is over," the teacher said; "Wouldn't she be better if we could have the door open?"

There was a moment of hesitation, during which Sally Ally Flower and her sons exchanged glances.

"It wouldn't be too cold with the door open?" Ethel persisted.

"No —" Jasper drawled, in some embarrassment, "Hit wouldn't be too cold none; but they's a neighbor, a piece back on th' maountin' that we all hain't very popular with, an' if we-all left the door open at night they-all might come along an' shoot in."

Another pause, during which the teacher's brain wrestled with this statement.

"They-all got Pap last year," one of the younger boys volunteered, "An' Hillard Conty he 'lows he's goin' t' git Jasp, next."

Jasper made an inarticulate rumble in his throat.

"He'll hev ter shoot mighty quick, when he can," he said, with a significant gesture, "er I may git thar first."

"You wouldn't kill him?" Ethel's eyes stared with horror.

"Why not?" was the cool rejoinder. "Them Contys has shot up a right smart heap o' my kin. Hit's my turn now, an' I'm shore bound ter git one o' they-uns before long."

Ethel looked down at Gladys Imozel, feeling faint and helpless. The child's eyes were closed, and she lay exhausted, scarcely seeming to breathe after her fierce struggle with the cough.

"Better lay her onto the settle," the mother said, "She sleeps thar'."

She eased the child upon a miscellany of garments, and threw a ragged coverlid over her. Half an hour later the family sought rest, their guest in the one bed the household boasted; Mrs. Clapp and her offspring variously disposed about the floor. In five minutes the teacher was the only waking one in the group.

It seemed to her that she had scarcely lost consciousness, hours later, when she was roused by a pitiful gasping. She sat up in bed, listening. The mother was already up, and bending over the settle, whence came the terrible sound. Ethel hastened to light the candle. Gladys Imozel lay panting upon her mother's knees, her eyes glassy, her lips flecked with blood.

"You, Jasp," Mrs. Clapp called, "Git up an' open that door."

Jasper obeyed. The brothers were all awake now, and their mother looked from one to the other in dry-eyed woe. The truth was plain, even to the youngest. Ethel came and knelt at the stricken woman's side.

"Let me take her," she pleaded.

"I won't," was the tense reply. "She hain't dyin', I tell ye; she hain't! I won't have it."

The child stirred uneasily.

"I be dyin'," she murmured. "I be dyin', an' I hain't bin babtized. Oh! I wanted ter be a child of God."

The wail died away in a gasp, a groan burst from the mother's lips, and the anguished drops stood upon her forehead.

"Oh, Lord Almighty," she cried, "What shall I do? She hain't a'goin' ter die happy!"

To Ethel came an inspiration.

"Listen," she commanded, bending over the mother's rocking shoulders.

"In our church, in an emergency — in a case like this, I mean, when the end is close, any one may baptize the one who is going."

The woman caught at the suggestion: — "Hit 'd make her happy," she gasped, "Could *you?* Would ye dast?"

For reply Ethel began pouring water into a little basin.

"Oh, my precious moppet," Sally Ally Flower murmured, crooning over the child, "You're *goin'* ter be babtized; you're *goin'* ter be made a child of God. Do ye hear, my lovely one?"

It was a strange scene the one candle lighted, in the rough, black-raftered room, with its dying fire. A solemn star, looking through the open door, saw the young men and boys kneeling, and the steadfast, upward gaze of Gladys Imozel's happy eyes, as she watched the teacher.

The girl's hands trembled, but her voice was clear and steady as she said over the short, sacred formula. When she had finished there was a long hush, broken at last by a wavering, peaceful sigh. The child of God had gone home to her Father.

It was Ethel who prepared the weary little form for its long rest, and who stayed with the mother when, at daybreak, Jasper rode off on her pony, to allay their fears at the Settlement. At sun up Brother Maggard, for whom one of the boys had been sent, was before the cabin door.

"Howdy, Sister Sally Ally Flower Clapp," he said, in tender greeting, as he dismounted from his horse.

"Howdy, Sister Ritchie."

He held Ethel's hand for an instant, while his gaunt mountaineer's face twitched, strongly.

"Troy, here," he said, indicating the messenger, "He told me all about hit, an' I 'low you done right, Sister. I 'low you done right in the sight of God."

When the Tide Turned.*

BY GEORGE HARVEY.

HEN Jack gets tired of his childhood home he goes to sea. The day of his departure is a holiday for all his friends. He promises to write to all, and compromises by writing, at long intervals, epistles to his mother, which read much like the personally kept log of a pleasure yacht, touring the world with its owner, with descriptions of what may be seen from a ship's deck.

But no mention is made of that plunge into Hades during the passage of the Red Sea, nor of the well nigh delirious nights following days when the thermometer stood a hundred and twenty all day under the deck awning.

Nor of the washing, scrubbing and painting, and slaves' work under the watchful eye of the profane mate.

Nor of the two days' nightmare, coaling at reeking Colombo.

No, Jack puts a brave note into his home letter, and if he deserts in Hong Kong and thereby side-steps the horrors of the return voyage, his mother hears that he has accepted a position in a sealing steamer, where he expects to get rich, etc., etc.

And so the story runs for four or five years, when Jack turns up with a bronzed skin, a satisfied curiosity, and an experience which will be related only in fragments. The heights he all but attained will be told with circumstance and much embroidery, but just how many times he came within an ace of touching bottom he carefully forgets.

When Silas tires of rural America and goes to seek his fortune, New York swallows him no less impartially than the sea does Jack. She hides his struggles, covers his misery, condones his shame, and blots out all that is undesirable to remember in his battle of life.

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The following story is true in all its details, real names alone being omitted, for obvious reasons.

Henry Bradford left his Old Colony home on a bright summer day to seek his fortune in New York.

He had the best wishes of everybody, for he was a decent boy, and all who knew him liked his manly ways.

But he found the metropolis a tough proposition. The fierce, pushing, fight-for-life work-seekers jostled and crowded him beyond all his previous conceptions, and he, not having the faculty of retaliating in kind, found himself pushed to the wall.

He got employment, it is true, but he could not hold it for any length of time, owing largely to his lack of knowledge of urban conditions, and also to much bad luck.

So, after four years' struggle, he gave it up and acknowledged himself beaten. The struggle had been continuous and altogether one-sided, and as he sat upon the stringpiece of an East River pier, it was borne in upon him that he had made as good a fight as he knew how. And lost !

And now, when Failure had completely enveloped him in her sombre cloak, he felt there was nothing else to do but to return to the old town. There, at least, he could live, and be among those who knew him and would sympathize with him. Of the two dollars which he possessed, one dollar would pay his fare to Providence, and it would be a small matter for him to walk the intervening miles to his old home.

This plan he carried into effect, and the evening of an early October day found him in Plymouth, which adjoined his home town. He was tired, footsore and discouraged. Plymouth always held a fascination for him, and he betook himself to the Burial Hill and there, on a lonely bench, he looked down upon the lights of Market Square, to the riding-lights of a few craft lying at anchor in the harbor, and further, to that great light on the Gurnet whose effulgent rays guided and warned local and coastwise mariners. Long he sat and brooded. One by one the lights were extinguished, and as the town went to sleep he felt the necessity of doing likewise. He stumbled down the narrow path to Market Square, across the main street and, as though drawn by some magnet, to the water's edge. There the gray canopy with its iron gate,

which shields Plymouth Rock from the vandal and the relic hunter, reared its head. Everything was familiar to Henry, yet his eye dwelt longingly on each object. Here was a short strip of pebbly beach, and drawn high up on it was a fisherman's dory. The boat contained a pair of oars, a sprit-sail and mast, a coiled seine, and, in the stern, a small breaker of fresh water. Without hesitation he stepped aboard, and, adjusting the thwarts and oars and arranging the sail so that it would act as a cover for him, he lay down and in two minutes was sound asleep.

Henry Bradford was a sound sleeper, a very sound sleeper, else this story might never have been written. He knew naught of the stealthy rise of the tide nor of the lift of the dory as she became water borne, nor did he know that in his earlier arrangements he had loosened the noosed painter from the boulder over which it had been slipped. He did not feel the impact of the gentle southwest wind which wafted the dory slowly but surely to the point of the beach.

The outgoing tide in Plymouth Harbor is much like a mill-race as it hurries to the greater waters of Barnstable Bay. Passing the end of the Beach with the full strength of the tide and the compelling southwest wind, which had become stronger as the boat receded from the shore, on she swept, past low-lying Saquish, to the further Gurnet. Still impelled by the wind and current, the boat drifted toward Race Point. The ebbing tide from the North Shore estuaries and Massachusetts Bay meets at Race Point the ebbing tide from the South Shore estuaries and Barnstable Bay. The meeting of the waters is, to say the least, tumultuous, as it races over the shallows of Peaked Hill bars. But from there on the mighty current is swallowed in the bosom of the great Atlantic.

Henry Bradford knew naught of this as he slept the sleep of utter weariness. The dory is, perhaps, the best sea boat ever designed, and will stand more wind and weather and sloppy seas than any other small craft. If he was somewhat jostled and shaken it only served to accentuate a deeper sleep. But there are some happenings of Nature which no man, sleeping or waking, may allow to pass unnoticed. As he slept, a giant hand seemed to reach from infinity and, grasping his frail boat, carry it and

him up, up, up till all the world became dark, and then, without warning, dropped him into an abyss so deep and awful that it seemed as though a cleft in solid earth had been opened to engulf him forever.

Henry Bradford awoke, with chattering teeth and staring eyes, to find his boat being lifted again by the mighty hand of his dream. Up until the very stars seemed nearer, an instant's pause on an uneasy pinnacle, then down again with lightning rapidity to that awful depth, the horror of which was still upon him. Henry Bradford was no physical coward. The grit and determination which had impelled an ancestor to land on these very shores nearly three hundred years previous was still latent in him. He cherished no illusions of the mighty ocean. He knew the come and go of its tides, he knew the lift and throw of its mighty bosom and, although his present situation was unique, he felt that it was purely physical and to be met and grappled with. His rudely aroused senses apprised him of the situation. He knew himself to be in the dory, and he also realized that the dory was afloat and contending with a phase of ocean disturbance with which he was not familiar. The next uplift was of much less volume than its predecessor, and after three or four minor fluctuations he felt that his boat was rising and falling to the normal Atlantic swell. The aid was heavy, damp and clammy, and was filled with many odors difficult of description, but all of the briny sea. He cautiously raised himself to a standing position and surveyed the horizon. The arc of sea and sky before him was utterly blank. As he slowly swung his body to complete his view of the horizon, he saw on his starboard quarter, and well astern of him, the well-known gleam of Race Point Light. At the same moment there burst on his ear a thunderous, reverberating roar, such a sound as might be caused by a mighty wind devastating a great forest, or by the discharge of a thousand field pieces in a mighty cavern.

Tense and strained, Henry sensed everything which came to ear, eye or nostril. He realized that there had been a mighty upheaval of the ocean. That thunderous sound was undoubtedly the impact of a tidal wave upon a distant shore, that strange, clammy smell, the tang of which was still in his nostrils, was no doubt caused by the depths of ocean being hurled to the surface

by this marine cataclysm. It was very dark, the clouds obscured the sky and a light wind came from the northeast. Henry had now got his bearings. His dory had shipped but little water during the awful tumult. He was in the act of stepping the mast, when a new sound broke upon his ear. It was the slatting of a vessel's sails, and in his immediate proximity. His strained eyes discerned a blotch upon the blackness of the night, slightly on his port bow and becoming momentarily plainer to his vision. A moment later he was able to make out a schooner, with all sail set, riding deeply in the water and nearly hove-to. Henry dropped the mast and shipped the oars, a few strokes of which brought him on her weather quarter, whence he lustily hailed, "Schooner, ahoy!" which, being repeated and varied with "Aboard the schooner," bringing him no reply, he again seized his oars and brought the dory alongside. He leaped lightly on board, painter in hand. He trailed his boat astern and secured the painter firmly. The wheel, which was of the diamond screw type, was about half down. The schooner was on the starboard tack with all sail set, including fore and main gaff topsails, foretopmast staysail, jib and flying jib. About twenty feet of her midship bulwark was torn away and her decks were wet and slippery from recent inundations. The slide of the cabin companion-way was open, but the doors were closed. A brass lamp, set in gimbals, shed a pale radiance in the cabin and Henry lost no time. A faint inkling had come to him of the calamity which had overtaken this vessel.

A hasty inspection of the cabin berths and its single stateroom disclosed no sign of life. An inspection of the deck forecastle produced similar results, and Henry Bradford realized that he was the only living being aboard that ill-fated schooner.

His mind was now intensely alert and he was on familiar ground. As fast as halyards could be handled, he clewed up both gaff topsails, and hauled down and furled the flying jib, jib and foretopmast staysail. Then, after stoppering both gaff topsails, he returned to the deck and, in a few minutes, had the schooner upon the proper course for Boston Light.

Daylight had come and the wind had freshened slightly. A hurried examination of the papers in the captain's stateroom disclosed the vessel's manifest, which gave the information that the

schooner *Clara Bates,* four hundred and fifty tons register, owned by Bates & Joyce, of Boston, commanded by Captain Ezra Perry, of Salem, and a crew of five men, was carrying five hundred and thirty tons of coal consigned to the owners of the vessel, in Boston. A small sum of money in the Captain's desk and the usual instruments of navigation were the things of most value which caught Bradford's eye during his hurried examination. The demands of the inner man were satisfied with a substantial breakfast, consisting of ham, fried potatoes and hot coffee.

The wind held true, and Bradford's mind had already worked out a plan of operations. He led his jib downhaul and jib halyards — secured by a slip noose — aft, and, once in smooth water, he made ready his sheet anchor, secured by a cat stopper only, and overhauled a few fathoms of chain. At four o'clock that afternoon, he brought the *Clara Bates* into the wind on South Boston flats, hauled down his jib and, as the vessel lost way, slipped his cat-stopper and was anchored !

The rest is mere detail. It was in the Fall of the great coal strike, and coal was *coal.* Henry sent word to Bates & Joyce by the harbor master's tug, and an hour later the corpulent and genial Mr. Joyce was on board and had heard Henry's wonderful story. At eleven o'clock the next day Henry Bradford signed a release and accepted a lump sum of five thousand dollars in lieu of all services rendered and salvage expected. There is one more happy detail. The twenty feet of bulwark that was torn away from the side of the *Clara Bates* acted as a life raft for the members of her company, who were swept overboard at the same time. They were picked up a few hours later by an ocean-going tug with a tow of coal barges and bound for Salem.

At the earnest request of Henry Bradford, his name was suppressed from the newspaper accounts of the salving of the *Clara Bates,* and his appearance among his townspeople a few days later was received as the home-coming of a man who had gone out, done battle with the great world, and returned successful.

Wanted — A Homely Girl.*

BY DANIEL A. LORD.

IT was no unusual trail of events that led Tom Templeton, the proprietor and manager of the Washington Restaurant, to insert an advertisement in the want columns of his daily paper, and it was with no little complacency that he viewed the following notice as it stood forth on the printed page.

> WANTED — A Cashier in a down town restaurant; bright and quick, no experience required, only homely girls need apply. C 184

"This," he soliloquized, "was truly a last resource, a final hope"—and his mind reverted with a shudder to the events of the past two years. In all, he could remember, there were twenty-one cashiers who had graced and disgraced the high seat behind the desk, and this was exclusive of Miss Brown, who had remained only long enough to elope with his chef and the day's receipts. There had been tall cashiers and slender ones, cashiers graceful and cashiers petite; but with unfailing regularity they had been pretty, and with unfailing regularity some quondam customer of the restaurant had borne them off to grace an up-town apartment.

When Templeton had started in business, he had mused as follows:

"Honey draws flies, therefore, on the same principle, a pretty cashier is a valuable asset as a drawing card. Others may stand pat, but here is where I draw."

So Tom, being a bachelor and consequently in a position to undertake such a selection, chose from the host of employment-seeking maidens who responded to his call, not the girl with the best references, but the one with the most classic profile, and the largest Niagara of puffs and rolls. Things were beginning to

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run smoothly in the new establishment, when one day the cashier blushingly informed him that she had signed a life's contract as a cook in a restaurant of her own. When Tom recovered from the shock, he learned that his cashier had been awaited at the church, and that he was left to handle the pasteboards and make change as best he could.

As a consequence, between checks, he penned another ad., and chose from the answering girls another cashier scarcely inferior to her predecessor. But alas for mortal men! scarcely had the new prestidigitateuse learned to scoop in thirty checks with one hand, and make change on twenty others with her remaining digits, when she, too, cast the lasso of her smile around an unsuspecting patron, who promptly proceeded to invest in orange blossoms and wedding cake.

Tom should have learned wisdom from this second experience, but he did not, nor, in fact, did he from the third, the fourth, the fifth, or even the fifteenth departure, and pretty cashier after pretty cashier occupied the desk, only to soon help to increase the revenues of the department of licenses.

But even the most constant believer, in time learns from experience, and with a sigh Tom at length forsook his "Honey-draws-flies" principle, and proceeded to pen his homely girl advertisement. It was with considerable trepidation that he awaited the outcome of his venture, and the morning following the insertion of his ad. found him seated at the desk in his private office, and nervously waiting the applicants.

It was not very long, however, before the first girl to answer his ad. appeared. Templeton looked at her, and then, in a condition which bore no slight resemblance to a man who had collided with a dropping brick, he managed to lead her to the door. A second applicant followed the first, and a third the second; but by the time that the eighth arrived, Tom had steeled his heart to such an extent that he felt that he could have looked a female tiger in the face without a tremor. But the eighth proved to be his salvation. Everything his want-ad. had stated as being requisite she possessed. Her answers proved her to be quick and bright; her references were the most satisfactory possible, and, best of all, she was undeniably homely. Yes, Tom admitted, no one, not even

her dearest friend, could have accused her of being beautiful. She was tall, rather slender, with black hair, and blue eyes; and there was an unmistakable air of breeding about her; but her features were absurdly irregular, and her mouth was unusually large.

So, without more ado, Miss Yorke was installed behind the cashier's desk, and Templeton stood aside to watch developments.

Now, hitherto, it had been the custom whenever the news went abroad that Tom had engaged a new cashier, for every male patron of the Washington Restaurant, whether he might be the city editor of the *Herald*, who came in every noon for his bread and milk, or the office boy in the struggling lawyer's office, who daily indulged in "pie and," to file slowly past the cashier's desk, and make a careful inventory of the points of pulchritude of the new goddess of short change. And on every former occasion they had departed with the unanimous verdict that the manipulator of the cash register was one calculated to make the Venus of Milo fight for her laurels.

So, as soon as it was rumored that the new cashier had been installed, there was a general exodus from the neighboring office buildings and a general descent upon the Washington Restaurant. Tom, as he stood to one side of the desk, fairly gloated with joy as he saw the varied expressions which crossed the faces of patrons who had entered with the idea of feasting their eyes on a dream of beauty, and found themselves gazing in amazement on an exceedingly plain, or rather, a decidedly homely, girl. The editor was the last to enter. He gave one look at the new cashier and then rushed up to Templeton.

"For the love of Heaven," he gasped; "what has happened to your taste? Why that girl is positively——" and editor though he was, he was forced to stop for lack of suitable expression.

Tom smiled enigmatically.

"I believe," he said at length, "I believe that the Washington has a permanent cashier at last."

On the following day Tom thought he saw a slight falling off in his patronage, and he began to look serious. Here was another consideration, entirely; could it be that a homely cashier

would be enough to drive away the trade? Tom thought that he certainly could not afford to allow his trade to fall away, even to avoid the inconvenience of a constant changing of cashiers, and he lay awake that night until the wee small hours puzzling and worrying about it. He finally decided that, come what might, he would cling to his homely cashier experiment for one week. But the end of that one week, instead of showing a falling off, showed rather an increase in the clientele of the Restaurant — for the marvelous had happened. The patrons of the Washington had approved Tom's homely cashier. They soon discovered that she had a pleasant smile and a cheery greeting for each of them; they found that she was never at a loss for a quick answer or a bright sally for every shaft of wit they shot at her, and, moreover, unlike her predecessors, she never made mistakes in their change.

Tom watched this unmistakable approval with some trepidation. Could it be that, despite his efforts, some one would bear off this, his last hope for a steady cashier? But he soon discovered that the feeling existing between the cashier and the patrons was only that of good fellowship, and that none ever tarried longer than was required for the payment of his check and the safe depositing of his change. Whether this was due to a lack of interest on the part of the customers or to the unmistakable reserve with which Miss Yorke unobtrusively surrounded herself, Tom was unable to ascertain.

Three months went by and Tom began to metaphorically pat himself on the back every time he thought of his homely cashier, for the business was flourishing, and the new manipulator of the change seemed to be perfectly satisfied with her position. One evening, however, he chanced to be invited out to dinner at the home of a young married couple of his acquaintance, and just before dinner was announced, his hostess led him aside, and said:

"I want you to meet and take out to dinner an old school friend of mine, if you will. She is a charming girl, very clever and well educated, for her family were considered extremely wealthy until her father died during the wheat panic. Poor girl, she has had the care of her mother and sister since then; and, Tom, you know you said you admired plucky girls, didn't you?"

So Tom consented to escort the young lady to the table and show her his best dinner tricks, and meekly followed his hostess across the room to where a group of young ladies were standing together.

"Miss Yorke, I want you to meet your dinner partner, Mr. Templeton."

Tom heard the words in a sort of a daze, for he found himself gazing into the smiling eyes of his Homely Cashier!

"Why I believe you know each other," said the hostess.

Miss Yorke smiled.

"We have met," she said.

Tom never quite forgot that dinner. At first he thought he would be at a loss for conversation, for hitherto their only subjects of discussion had been receipts and expenditures, patent cash registers, and new checking systems. But, to his unbounded surprise, though they never once mentioned the restaurant, the conversation flowed as smoothly as if they had known each other and met under like conditions all their lives. It was marvelous, he thought, as they were seated at dinner, the change a dinner gown could make in a girl.

Before the third course was served, Tom began to wonder why he had never noticed before how really beautiful and expressive her eyes were; during the salad he noted for the first time that there was a lustrous gloss to her hair, and that it was remarkably fine and heavy; during the dessert he decided that her voice was the sweetest and clearest he had ever heard; and as they sipped their demi tasse, Tom committed the extreme folly of asking for permission to call.

Miss Yorke smiled a surprised little smile, and gave her consent. So two nights later found Tom wending his way toward a little South Side apartment, where, she had told him, she, her mother, and her younger sister resided. During the two days which had followed the dinner party, neither had referred to it nor to the prospective call; and it pleased him to think that she had not tried to blend business with pleasure. But in some mysterious way, Tom had found many more things concerning which he must consult her during those two days than he had during all the former time in which she had been in his employ.

When he arrived at the little apartment, Tom was greeted by Miss Yorke, who introduced him to her mother, a sweet-faced lady, and to her sister, a bright, sprightly girl of seventeen. Tom, upon seeing her mother, immediately conjectured that in her youth she must have looked just as her daughter did, for, thought he, she had the same blue eyes and the same luxuriance of hair. As the evening wore on, he, poor bachelor that he was, thought that he had never seen anything quite so homelike as this little apartment, nor anything quite so tender and true as the affection of that little family. Then she played for him, and Tom sat there in a sort of a dream, and before his vision seemed to float the picture of an apartment of his own, with just such a homelike appearance, just such affection, and—well you can complete the picture if you ever feel as Tom did.

During the weeks that followed, there were more calls at the little apartment, sundry trips to the theatres, and not a few orders at the confectioner's and florist's. Her frank enjoyment of his little attentions, her endless fund of good humor, and the absence of the selfishness and the lack of interest which had characterized so many girls of his acquaintance, all had their telling effect on the proprietor of the Washington Restaurant. So one night, Tom, with the usual hopelessness and stammering of lovers, propounded the time-worn question; and, after the blissful hour which followed her low-voiced affirmative, he left, treading the proverbial atmosphere and with his head playing tag with the clouds and the moonbeams.

Suddenly he stopped in his walk, for a sudden thought had dragged him from Heaven back to earth.

"Dog-gone it!" he gasped; "this isn't France—I've lost another cashier!"

The Fate of Sultan.*

BY ANNA HUSTED SOUTHWORTH.

THE Lambert Girls!

One could scarcely have invented a more absurd misnomer for those withered crones, but the kindly New England custom called all spinsters "girls," and as "girls" the Lambert sisters had been known for more than half a century.

Strangely quaint figures were they, remarkable in any crowd. Tall, thin, and straight as the proverbial ramrod, always dressed exactly alike in black garments whose fashioning never varied. Their full gathered skirts were comfortably short, disclosing heel less prunella gaiters with elastic sides. Their close quaker-like bonnets had funny little frilled curtains at the back, and the wide ribbon strings showed the creases of careful folding. Invariably, rain or shine each old woman carried an umbrella of unguessable antiquity, and they walked with a delicate, mincing gait, in strong contrast to the bearing of the present day No one ever sneered at their peculiarities. Indeed, the town was rather proud of them, as it was of its ancient church with its surrounding "God's Acre" where so many generations of Lamberts slept under the sheltering elms, and the Lambert name was closely linked with all the dearest traditions of the place.

Looking at those women, it seemed impossible that youth or love or hope had ever been theirs, yet those faded eyes had been brilliant once, and people still live who tell of the days when the "Lambert Place" rang with laughter and song — when merry music was made in the balcony over the great door, while light feet danced all round the broad pillared piazza.

Local swains vainly wooed the proud damsels. They were waiting for some "Prince Charming" who, alas! never came, while

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stealthy spinsterhood, creeping closer and closer, enveloped them in strangling folds, crushing out the little charm which youth had briefly lent, so when financial disaster overwhelmed them, at their father's death, they withdrew from all social life to a haughty seclusion rarely broken.

One old woman-servant, an equally ancient man-of-all-work, and Sultan, their black cat, formed the entire establishment. The old maids were wonderful in a way, but Sultan was really a splendid creature, quite worthy his royal name. No spot of white flecked his glossy fur, but, beneath great topaz eyes, his whiskers gleamed against the jetty surface like spreading silver threads. His sweeping tail was a raven plume for beauty, and his stately bearing hinted of a lineage reaching back to dim Egyptian days when cats were deities, and temples were built for such as he. No human being could express more supreme disdain than Sultan showed when presuming strangers attempted familiarities, and he was never seen outside the grounds where he lived as the cherished pet and familiar of the "Lambert Girls." The great black cat was a mysterious being. No one had ever seen Sultan as a kitten, and stories were whispered of a possibly uncanny origin; of his sudden coming no one knew whence, and of his immediate adoption, but no one could possibly have prophesied his magnificent death!

The lovely town lies almost within the shadow of majestic old Ascutney. Its streets are verdant vistas stretching away to the crowning foot-hills, but one bowery avenue is abruptly closed by the "Lambert Place." Four huge pine trees, black with age, stretch giant arms above the arching gateway. The grounds were laid out and the mansion built, when only a handful of modest houses clustered about the church, and the only roadways were those leading to outlying farms. That was more than a century ago.

Since children must be taught, and boundary lines were often in dispute, a school-house and court-house had been erected, but no one dreamed how the quiet Puritan hamlet would grow to a place of importance, and no one had translated the murmured prophecy of the little river tumbling so turbulently over its rocky bed, boasting triumphantly of unfettered strength.

Eager to join the broad Connecticut, only two miles away, it rushed through the valley, growing more and more exultant, till at length men listened, and, listening, comprehended its arrogant claim to unlimited power. Schemes were at once contrived to shackle and direct its strength. Surveyors and engineers came,—charters were granted to daring corporations, — mills were built, and, guided by the same tell-tale stream, a railway laid shining lines through intricate forest paths and obstructing, rock ribbed hills. The hamlet grew to a town. Farms were absorbed, streets were laid out, building lots were plotted and rapidly sold, till audacious encroachment threatened the broad acres of the "Lambert Place."

Judge Lambert watched this progress with frowning disapproval. He would have no share in the "improvements." No argument or tempting offer could make him sell a single foot of his cherished land, or invest his money in the factories, and when the town authorities dared to ask that Broad Street might continue its course through his grounds, the old gentleman's wrathful indignation at what he termed "an intolerable insult" sent the town's envoy away with humiliating haste and tingling ears.

"*What!*" shouted the Judge. "Allow a street through my grounds! *Never,* Sir! It is a damnable impudence for any one to even think of such an outrage, much less to have the audacity to propose it!" And rising to his full six feet, with clenched fist and blazing eyes, he flung open the door, closing his refusal with:

"Remember, Sir, you who have dared to offer this intolerable insult, that you are never again to presume to speak to me, never to set foot within my gates! A street through my grounds! *I'll see you and the town damned first!*" The great door was slammed with crashing force, and Broad Street has never been completed to this day.

Although the Judge would not countenance public enterprise at home, he did listen to the siren song of speculation abroad. He knew that his daughters would never marry. His available funds were not excessive, and he wanted to acquire enough ready money so there could never be any question of dividing his lands. So, very secretly, very sagaciously, he fondly thought — he began to operate in stocks. The old story was repeated. Large gains at

first, further ventures, a sudden panic, the wiping out of "margins," and — utter ruin!

Judge Lambert did condescend to take a daily paper. The journal was duly aired and neatly folded beside his plate at breakfast, and his first glance was always at the financial news.

One morning, talking gaily with his daughters, he opened the sheet, grew ashen, dropped the paper, and, clutching at his heart, with the exclamation, — "Good God! I am ruined!" fell from his chair — dead!

When accounts were examined, the estate was found so heavily encumbered that immediate sale was imperative. Acre by acre everything was sacrificed except the home lot and the house. There, the "Lambert Girls" lived in bitter pride. Those who attempted to show any sympathy found their efforts chillingly received, if not openly resented, until at length all friendly intercourse ceased. Strangers who admired the place were told its story, and tantalizing descriptions were given of rare books and marvelous treasure in the disused library; of wonderful silver and rare cut glass imported from England; of delicate porcelains from India and China, and of splendid mahogany, filling darkened rooms. All this was quite enough to rouse intense interest, but when I heard the story of an ancestral portrait — the original was a General of Revolutionary fame, if you please! — when I was told of the hero's *silver-plated* sword, resting with its splendid scabbard beneath the picture, exasperated curiosity became extreme, and I set my wits at work to devise some scheme for inspecting those jealously guarded treasures.

It seems that the portrait, a sacred thing in the eyes of the sisters, hung above the parlor mantel in a massive golden frame, but the precious sword was the fetish supremely worshipped. Its regular polishing was a solemn rite. No smallest shadow of tarnish ever marred the embossed hilt of solid silver, but no amount of care or friction could keep the sacrilegious rust from invading the blade.

In vain were grave consultations held, in vain were tried all manner of remedial pastes and powders, until one day, while she was polishing the hilt, and dolefully observing some rust spots, Miss Emily cried out:

"Why, Henrietta! I know what we can do! We can have the sword silver-plated so heavily that it will perfectly shield the steel, and stand any amount of rubbing!"

"How very clever of you, dear!" replied Miss Lambert, and both old women glowed with delighted anticipation, while they discussed ways and means.

It was decided to entrust the work to a local jeweler. They sent at once for the man that the important matter might be privately arranged. The jeweler responded readily, delighted to accept the commission. He gravely listened to all the solemn injunctions for care and secrecy, while he reverently handled the sacred relic. Speedy execution and faithful work were promised, the sum to be paid was named, and he finally, with unhallowed glee, carried away the trophy disguised by wrappings.

The sisters watched him out of sight, trembling lest their plan had been too audacious, and great was their excited suspense till the day arrived for the return of their treasure.

"I am quite sure that the subject was duly named in their prayers at night and morning!" laughed my friend who told the story.

The jeweler kept his word, bringing home the sword in dazzling splendor. The scabbard had also been burnished to the last degree of brilliancy, and nothing could exceed the rapture with which the two old ladies laid the glorified relic in its place, and watched the firelight dancing over the shining hilt.

Thinking the story too good to keep, the traitor jeweler told it, salving his conscience with the plea that he was only expected to keep the matter secret while the work was being done, and so presently the whole town was laughing over the latest eccentricity of those "queer Lambert Girls."

"Only the family doctor and the rector have ever seen the splendid thing," finished my friend, and I exclaimed—

"*I'll* see that sword or perish!"

"You will never even pass the gate," laughed the lady.

"Sultan will fly at you, and scratch out your eyes! I really believe he is an incarnate demon, and had those Lambert Girls lived in Colonial days, they would have been burned for witches just on his account."

"I'm not to be frightened by any cat!" I retorted with scorn. "*I am going into that house,* before I leave town, but I'll not tell you a word of my plans, you scoffer!"

"Good luck!" cried my friend, in absolute unbelief.

All woodland ways are tempting to such a veteran tramp as I, and I now arranged my morning walks so that going or coming I must pass the forbidden territory. Many a time did I stroll up to that closed gate, many a time did I look longingly over the palings, pretending to admire the wild tangle of old-fashioned flowers, hoping that one of the ladies might appear, giving opportunity for courteous speech, thus paving the way for better acquaintance, but no door or window ever opened. Every time I lingered thus, Sultan was sure to spring from some place and confront me with his great yellow eyes, with talons ready for assault should I lay my hand on the latch. One day he came so near that I stooped to caress him, putting my hand through the fence, when a vicious slap from his claws accompanied by a more wicked spit and hiss, forced retreat. Then the handsome demon lashed his great tail angrily, and turning, marched to the house, where he lightly leaped through an open window, sure that he had settled me for that day.

"Going to report, I suppose, you fiend!" I muttered, looking at the glove his claws had ruined, and adding aloud—

"All the same, Sir Sultan, I'll see that sword in spite of you!"

Time passed too rapidly. My visit was closing, and the case seemed utterly hopeless. Occasionally my friend would taunt me with failure, but "the perseverance of the Saints" is feeble compared to that of an obstinate and curious woman, so I continued my walks down Broad Street.

September mornings were cool, noontides were decidedly hot, and one day, reaching the Lambert Place, I leaned languidly against a post, as if half fainting from fatigue. The brilliant idea had occurred to me that compassionate eyes might be watching behind those old painted window screens, and that, seeing my evident distress, common humanity might prompt an invitation to enter for rest.

Well! — I leaned against that blessed post till I was really exhausted with the strain of the posture, but no sound reached me

and I was turning away with vexed annoyance, when, walking along the top rail came Sultan, with a derisive stare of defiance, seeming to exult in my fresh defeat. I tried to box his ears. Of course he easily evaded the blow and favored me with another spit and scratch.

Storms gather quickly among the New Hampshire hills, but generally a brooding gloom gives sufficient warning to escape the deluge.

The day after Sultan's latest caress, I had wandered farther than usual, and the September day was closing as I gained the end of Broad Street, when a sudden growl of thunder and splash of huge drops startled me. The only house near was the Lambert mansion, and a gleeful imp whispered.

"Here's your chance! Make a dash for it, and demand shelter. You will never have a better excuse!"

Now, I rather enjoy a thunder storm, never feeling fear during the grand exhibition, but that impish suggestion was excellent, so, snatching up my skirts, I ran, pushed open the gate, and sped up the graveled path, just as the house door opened, and Miss Lambert came out calling anxiously:

"Sultan! Sultan! Where are you?"

A livid flash of lightning nearly blinded me, a crashing thunder peal shook the skies, and I almost screamed

"Oh, *please let me in!*" as I sprang upon the porch.

The awful thunder and my sudden apparition frightened the old lady, for her face was white, and her voice shook, as she stood aside, saying simply:

"Why, surely! Come in at once!"

Inwardly exultant, though outwardly shy, I gasped out some sort of apology, while again Miss Lambert called "Sultan!" and then, as we turned, there stood the beast in the parlor door, staring with his usual baleful glare.

Miss Emily came forward with timid greeting, almost unheard in the clamor of the storm, which had risen to a furious gale.

A fire had been lighted and a chair was placed near the hearth for me, but conversation was impossible, so I sat watching the leaping flames and admiring the fine brass andirons, while wave after wave of violet, alternating with sheets of intolerably white

light, swept through the room, and the "live thunder" crashed as if the very dome of heaven were rending. The two old ladies stood trembling. Sultan, after coolly looking me over, seemed to decide that I was harmless, so he stretched himself at my feet, watching the blaze with his unwinking stare.

My memory of the next few minutes is indefinite. I only recall the incessant glare of lightning as it played over a polished mahogany wall table, and among the crystal pendants of some girandoles on the mantel. As I looked up at them, the stern gaze of the patriot ancestor met my eyes, and a sudden gleam from the dazzling sword hilt reminded me of my vow. The thought amused me so much that I smiled in spite of the hideous uproar of the elements.

When, for an instant, this was stilled, Miss Emily exclaimed:

"I never remember such a tempest! See how the leaves are flying! That last bolt must have struck very near! I only hope it is the last!"

As she spoke, a blinding, hissing flash filled the room, sending me to my feet with a sensation as if I had been first snatched from my chair by unseen, irresistible hands and then pushed back with equal force. Miss Lambert shrieked, for the historic scabbard slipped from its hooks and fell clattering to the floor, and the ponderous silvered sword fell directly upon poor Sultan, who sprang up with one convulsive bound, and then stood, a fixed *amazing figure, never to move again!* A distinct smell of sulphur almost choked us. Oh, it was *horrible! horrible!* Then came an awful bellowing roar, rumbling heavily away in the distance, half stunning us all, and, when we had recovered our senses, the storm was practically over, though the fierce lashing of the rain continued, and the winds howled as if a horde of banshees were calling for our souls.

Fearfully at last, Miss Lambert crept forward, then started back in speechless horror, for there, beside the strangely transfigured Sultan, lay the worshipped sword, black and hideously twisted, with not a trace of silver on its entire length. The solid silver hilt had *entirely disappeared*, while *every hair of Sultan's jetty fur stood stiffly out tipped with silver!*

Such a ghastly, uncanny effigy! The great yellow eyes still held

their vicious, defiant glare, seeming so living that not one of us dared touch the uncanny thing.

The sick terror of those panic-stricken minutes will never be forgotten. With a low moan of speechless anguish, Miss Emily came forward, trembling in every limb, to lift the ruined sword and scabbard. She laid them reverently aside, raising despairing, imploring eyes to the grim portrait as if to demand how such awful sacrilege could have been permitted.

All my curiosity concerning other treasures had vanished. My nerves were utterly unstrung, and when I tried to rise for taking leave, I found, to my horror, that Sultan was standing heavily on my skirt. Shuddering, I impatiently pulled the cloth free, and the cat fell over with a dull thud upon the hearth.

Speak, I could not, and so, with mutely courteous gestures of farewell, I crept away, pursued by the fiendish stare of those diabolical yellow eyes. They so haunt me to this day that I can never see a black cat without a poignant thrill of that remembered horror.

You sneer, saying —*"What a downright lie!"*

Very good, Sir, or Madam! I cannot blame you, and I should think the whole adventure a hideous dream, had I not visible, convincing proof.

On the hem of the skirt which I wore that day — and which I have never worn since — just where the cat stood, there *remains, clearly etched in silver, the outline of Sultan's paws, showing every claw fully extended in futile effort of defence!*

A Few Bars in the Key of G.*

BY CLIFTON CARLISLE OSBORNE.

[Very few stories ever written have attracted so much attention both in this country and abroad as this $100 prize tale which appeared in THE BLACK CAT four years ago. It has been read before hundreds of social and literary clubs and translated into many languages. This story is republished here by general request. For its equal THE BLACK CAT will pay $2100.]

IT was two o'clock, and time for the third watch on the night-herd. These two facts gradually impressed themselves on the consciousness of John Talbot Waring, as he was thumped into wakefulness by the Mexican "horse-wrangler." Disentangling himself from his damp blankets, he sat up and groped for his boots, meanwhile viewing with that strange satisfaction which misery finds in companionship, the rough pounding process which was being repeated upon the mummy-like figure by his side.

The dim light of the smoky lantern swinging from the ridge-pole of the dripping tent revealed the rolled-up forms of a dozen audibly slumbering cow-punchers, crowded together like sardines in a box; it also made visible an expression of disgust on the features of Mr. Waring, while failing completely to disclose the whereabouts of his missing boots. The sense of touch, however, presently located them lying in a little puddle near the tent flap, and their owner was immediately engrossed in the back-breaking task of forcing his swollen feet into the sodden leather.

"Seems to me, Jack, you ought to know enough to take your boots to bed with you," remarked his neighbor, "Slim" Caywood, as he complacently produced his own high-heeled pair from their dry nest. "That mornin' last week up on the Pass, when you had to do a war dance in the snow while they was thawin' out, don't seem to have learned you nothin'."

Waring paused in his struggle long enough to express, in a few well-chosen words, his opinions of boots in general, and his own

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wet ones in particular. This relief to his feelings seemed to endow him with renewed strength, for, after a few more violent contortions, he accomplished his purpose, and unrolling his "slicker," which had been serving temporarily as a pillow, enveloped himself in its clammy folds, and followed his tall fellow-victim of stern duty out into the drizzling rain.

There was a moon above the heavy clouds, but it might as well have been on the other side of the earth for all the assistance it gave in the operation of saddling two of the picketed horses. The herd lay to the north of the camp, and settling reluctantly into their soggy seats, the drowsy riders turned their horses in that direction, trusting to the instinct of the animals to find the cattle. The darkness was intense, and the wiry little beasts were obliged to pick their way cautiously over the rough ground lying between the camp and the spot where the herd had been "bedded down" for the night.

Presently the sound of a hoarse voice tunefully raised in a dismal minor melody came faintly to their ears, and as they neared the singer, they became aware that he was entreating the public to "take him to the graveyard, and place a sod o'er him," varying the monotony of this request by begging some one to "bury him not on the lone prairie." The effect of this mournful music was indescribably gruesome, and Waring found himself wondering with considerable impatience why cow-punchers invariably choose such gloomy themes for their songs, and then set them to the most funereal tunes imaginable.

Approaching carefully, to avoid startling the cattle, the two riders separated, and relieving the tired watchers, commenced their dreary three hours' vigil, on opposite sides of the herd. The cattle were unusually quiet, needing little attention, and Waring had ample opportunity to reflect on the disadvantages of a cow-puncher's life, as he rode slowly along the edge of the black mass of sleeping animals. The rain dripped from the limp brim of his sombrero, and ran in little streams from the skirts of his oil-skin coat into his already soaking boots. The chill wind, sweeping down from the mountains, pierced his damp clothes, and made him shiver in the saddle. For the hundredth time within a week, Waring condemned himself as an unutterable ass for relinquish-

ing the comforts of civilization for this hard life among the rough and dangerous slopes of Colorado.

He recalled his arrival on the range six months before, a "tenderfoot," and the various tribulations he had endured incident to his transformation into a full-fledged cow-puncher. He remembered with a smile, the painful surprise occasioned by his first introduction to a pitching horse. Of the hardships and dangers which come to every rider of the range, he had experienced his share, and faced them bravely, thereby winning the respect of the rough, lion-hearted men among whom he had cast his lot.

But all the weary months had been wasted; he had failed in his object; he could not forget. He was not the first to learn that one cannot escape memory merely by crossing the continent. It even seemed to him that, instead of growing more endurable with time, the soreness in his heart and the sting of regret increased with every passing day. He wondered if She felt the separation; if she cared. As his thoughts wandered back over the past two years, he recalled every incident of their acquaintance as distinctly as though it had occurred but yesterday. The day he had first seen her, as she stepped gracefully out beside the piano to sing, at a musicale he had attended, — the song she had sung, —

> "The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
> Are as a string of pearls to me."

the sweet days which followed, — their enjoyment together of symphony, oratorio, and opera, for both being amateurs of no mean ability, they had met (and loved) upon the common ground of their love of divine harmony.

He looked into the blackness of the night, and could see her as she appeared on that wonderful day when he had met her at the altar of Trinity Church, and spoken the words that were to bind them together through life. How beautiful she was, and how proud he had been of her as they walked down the broad aisle and out into the brilliant June sunshine, followed by the grand chords of Mendelssohn's masterpiece. He looked back at their wedding trip as at a beautiful dream. The noble mountains of New Hampshire seemed to have been created as a setting for their happiness; the great hotels only to cater to their pleasure. How well he remembered the return to the lovely home he had

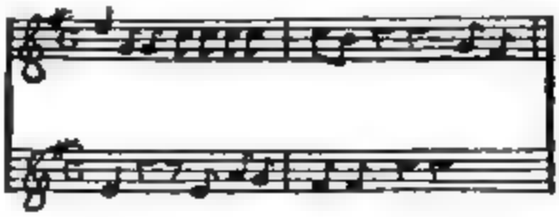
prepared for her, and the first dear days within its walls. How happy they had been, and how he had loved her! *Had* loved her! He *did* love her. That was his sorrow. He realized that as long as he had life, his whole heart would be hers.

And then the shadow had come over their home. He asked himself bitterly why he had not been more patient with her, and made allowances for her high spirit and quick temper. She was such a child. He could see now that he had been to blame many times in their quarrels, when at the time he had sincerely believed himself in the right. Should he go back to her, and admit that he had been wrong? Never! The memory of that last day was too clear in his mind. The words she had spoken in the heat of her anger had burned themselves into his soul, and could not be forgotten. Waring straightened in the saddle, and the hot blood rushed to his face. He wondered now that he had been able to answer her so calmly. He recalled every word he had said:

"Your words convince me that we cannot live together any longer. I will neither forget nor forgive them. I am going away. You are at liberty to sue for a divorce, if you care to do so. Three years, I believe, is the time required to substantiate a plea of desertion." That was all. Without another word he had left her, standing white and motionless in the centre of her dainty chamber, and gone from the beautiful home in white-hot rage, to come out here to the wildest spot he could find, and plunge into its perilous life, in the vain effort to forget.

He pulled down the dripping brim of his sombrero to shelter his face from the stinging wind, and resolutely turned his thoughts in other directions. He speculated vaguely on the condition of his considerable property, and wondered indifferently how his agents were managing it. His friends at the clubs, — did they miss him? From them his thoughts strayed to the strange postal card he had received the day previous, and he began to puzzle his brain in the effort to decide who had sent it, and what it could mean. It had been directed in care of his attorney, and forwarded by the lawyer to the remote mountain post-office where Waring received his mail. It was an ordinary postal card, its peculiarity consisting in the fact that the communication on the back was composed not of words, but music —

four measures in the key of G. This was the message:



He had hummed the notes over and over, and though they had a strangely familiar sound, yet he could not place the fragment, nor even determine the composer. His failure to decipher the enigma annoyed him. It had a meaning, of that he was convinced, but what could it be? Who could have sent it? Among his friends were many musicians, any one of whom might have adopted such a method of communicating with him. He began to hum the phrase, as he rode round and round the cattle.

The wind was dying out, and the rain had ceased. On the eastern mountain tops a faint rose tint was dimly visible; another hour of monotonous watching, and then for a hot breakfast beside the camp fire. Waring, abandoning the riddle of the postal, began to sing to pass the time, and his rich baritone rang out above the sleeping herd. The light stole slowly over the peaks, and chased the shadows from the plain. The camp awoke, and the men crawled shivering from the tent. The cook's fire whirled showers of sparks aloft. One by one the cattle stirred, rose, and commenced to graze. Waring still sang, carelessly passing from snatches of opera to lines of sacred harmony.

Suddenly, while in the midst of a passage from one of the great works of a master composer, he stopped short in surprise. *He was singing the notes on the card!* It had come to him like a flash. He tore open his coat and drew the postal from an inner pocket. There was no mistake. He had solved the mystery. Almost mechanically he reached for a pencil, and wrote the words under the lines of music, added a signature, and gazed long and earnestly, his face a perfect kaleidoscope of changing expressions; then, with a wild shout, he wheeled and rode furiously to camp.

Pulling up with a jerk that almost lifted the iron-jawed bronco from the ground, he literally hurled himself from the saddle, and reached the Boss in two bounds.

"I must be in Denver tonight! I want your best horse, quick!"

The Boss stared at him in astonishment:

"Why, man, it's a hundred an' twenty miles. You're crazy."

Waring fairly stamped in his impatience.

"It's only sixty to Empire," he cried, "and I can get the train there. It leaves at one o'clock, and I can make it, if you'll lend me Star. I know he's your pet horse, and you never let any one ride him, but I tell you, Mr. Coberly, this means everything to me. I simply *must* get there."

Coberly scowled. "You ought 'o know, Jack, that I won't lend Star. None o' the other horses can get you over there in that time, so you might 's well give it up. What in thunder's the matter with you that you're in such a confounded rush?"

Waring thought a moment, and then, drawing the Boss beyond earshot of the listening cow-punchers, spoke to him rapidly and earnestly, finally handing him the postal card. Coberly scanned it intently, and a change came over his face. When he looked up, it was with an expression of respect mingled with amazement.

"Why didn't you show me this at first? O' course you can have the horse. Hi there! Some o' you boys round up the horses an' rope Star for Mr. Waring. Jump lively."

The men made a rush for their saddles and, in an incredibly short time, several of them were racing across the plain in the direction of the bunch of horses. Waring dove into the tent and began gathering his few possessions. Coberly plunged around outside, giving orders at the top of his voice.

"Roll up some grub for Mr. Waring quick! Nick, you get his canteen an' fill it out o' my jug. Fly around now!"

A rush of hoofs announced the arrival of the horse and his escort, just as Waring emerged from the tent with his little bundle. A dozen hands made quick work of saddling, and with a hurried good-bye all around, he swung himself up and astride of the magnificent animal, and was off on his long ride. He looked back and saw the boys in a group around the Boss, who was explaining the cause of his hasty departure. Presently a tremendous yell reached his ears, and he saw hats frantically thrown up. He waved his hand in reply, and settled down in the saddle.

The long, pacing stride of Coberly's pet covered the ground in a surprising manner, and eight o'clock found twenty-three miles

behind his nimble feet, and the Bar Triangle Ranch in sight. A five-minute stop, and then on across the gently rising country to the stage station at the foot of the great Continental Divide, fifteen miles away. It lacked twenty minutes of ten o'clock when Waring drew rein in the shadow of the giant peaks that towered above him. He unsaddled and turned the big thoroughbred into the corral. A half-hour's rest would put new life into him. Twenty-two miles to the railroad, and nearly three hours in which to cover it. It seemed possible; but the great range must be crossed, and Waring knew that the ten miles of steep climbing to the snowy summit of Berthoud Pass meant more than twice that distance on the flat plain.

At quarter past ten, Star, refreshed by an energetic rubbing and a mouthful of water, was carrying him up the road, with no apparent diminution of power. Up, up they went, mile after mile, until the plain they had left was spread out like a map behind him, and the thick forest had given place to a scattering and scrubby growth of pines. They were nearing timber-line, and the piercing chill of the biting wind testified to the proximity of the snow-covered peaks. Two miles from the top Waring dismounted, and led his panting horse along the icy trail. The rarified air seemed to burn his lungs as he struggled up the remaining distance to the summit of the Pass, twelve thousand feet above the sea.

Twelve o'clock! He stopped, and anxiously examined the noble beast that had carried him so far and so well. The inspection reassured him. There was plenty of life and energy left in Star yet. Not without reason was he acknowledged the best horse in the county. One hour, and twelve miles to go, the first seven down the steepest road in the State. Could he make it? He must! A final pull at the cinches, and Waring was again in the saddle, racing down the dangerous path towards the sea of dark green forest that stretched far below.

Down sharp pitches and long slopes, around dizzy curves and through deep cañons, slipping, swaying, followed by masses of loose stones and gravel, they went, faster than ever that trail was covered before. The iron-shod hoofs struck fire from the flinty rocks, as, almost sitting on his haunches, Star would slide twenty

feet at a time down an unusually steep grade, recovering his footing with a staggering effort at the bottom. It was perilous work. They reached the timber-line, passed below it, and plunged into the woods. A mile beyond, they flew past the stage at a mad pace, throwing a shower of mud over the astonished passengers.

Down at last to the level road they came, with five miles still to go. Star swung into a strong, easy lope, and his rider drew a long breath. Not till then had he realized the strain of that wild ride. Rounding a turn in the road, he espied a horseman approaching, and turned out to pass him. The stranger eyed him sharply as he drew near, and suddenly whipped out a six-shooter.

"Hold up there. I want to talk to you."

For a moment Waring considered the chance of riding over the man, but for a moment only. The stranger looked too determined, and his aim was sure. He pulled up, raging.

"I suppose you want my money," he snarled. "Well, you're welcome to it if you'll leave me enough to pay my fare to Denver."

The other grinned.

"That's a good bluff, but it won't go. I'm the sheriff, an' I want to know where you're going with Joe Coberly's horse."

"Oh, is that all you want?" said Waring, relieved. "Why, I've been working for Coberly, and he lent me the horse to ride over here to catch the train." And he gathered up his reins.

"Hold on, young man," and the sheriff raised his gun suggestively, "that yarn won't do. I know old Joe, an' I happen to know that he wouldn't lend that horse to his own brother, let alone one of his cow-punchers. I guess I'll have to lock you up till the boys come over after you."

Waring groaned: "Look here, Mr. Sheriff, I'm telling you God's truth. Coberly let me take the horse because it was the only one that could get me over here in time to catch the train, and I had to be in Denver to-night without fail."

His captor shook his head: "It's no use, my friend; your story won't hold water. Why're you in such a tearin' hurry, anyway?"

Waring remembered the postal card; he reached into his breast pocket and produced it.

"That is my reason for haste," he said, "and that is why Coberly let me take the horse," and he added a few words.

Keeping his captive carefully covered with the muzzle of the revolver he carried, the officer rode closer and took the card. As he read it, his face lighted up, and he lowered his gun.

"That's all right, youngster. I'm sorry I stopped you. I don't wonder Joe lent you the horse; I'd 've done the same, even if I'd had to walk myself. I hope you won't miss the train. I'll ride down to the station with you, as some of the boys might want to string you up on account o' the horse — everybody knows him."

Overjoyed at this satisfactory turn of affairs, Waring touched Star with the spur and rode forward, with the repentant sheriff by his side, their horses in a rapid gallop. Mounting a rise, they saw the town before them, a mile distant. *The train was at the station!* Another touch of the spur, and Star stretched out into a run that gradually left the sheriff behind, well mounted though he was. A half mile yet to go! — A quarter! — The black smoke began to come in heavy puffs from the funnel of the engine, and the line of cars moved slowly away from the station. Then it was that Star showed the spirit that was in him. The quirt fell sharply on his flank for the first time that day, and he bounded forward and swept down upon the town like a whirlwind.

As the usual crowd of train-time loafers lounged around the corner of the station, their attention was attracted by the two swiftly approaching riders, and they paused to watch the race. Presently one cried:

"Hullo, that first horse is Coberly's black, an' he's sure movin' too. The other chap ain't in it. Why, it's the sheriff! An' he's after the other feller. Horse thief, by thunder! I'll fix him," and he reached for his hip.

The others took up the cry of "Horse thief!" and as Waring flashed past the building at Star's top speed, a volley of shots greeted him, and the bullets sang around his head. Fortunately, they went wild, and before any more could be fired, the sheriff tore into the crowd and roared:

"Stop shootin', you fools. The man's all right; he's only tryin' to catch the train." At this there was a laugh, and then a rush to the track, for an unobstructed view of the race.

The road ran for a mile beside the rails, as level as a floor. The train was gathering speed with every revolution of the wheels,

but Star was travelling too, and gaining at every jump. The crowd at the station danced and howled in their excitement.

"Will he make it?" "He's gainin'." "Look at that horse hump himself." "Gee, he's movin'!" "Hooray for the black!" "He'll make it!!" "He'll make it!!!"

Waring, with eyes fixed and jaw set, was riding desperately. Thirty feet! — The spectators in the doorway of the last car gazed breathlessly. Twenty feet — and Star straining every nerve and muscle in his body. Ten feet — and still he gained. Only five feet now! Inch by inch he crawled up. He was abreast of the platform!! Swerving his flying horse closer to the track, Waring leaned over, and grasping the railings with both hands, lifted himself from the saddle, kicked his feet from the stirrups, and swung over to the steps of the car. The faint sound of a cheer reached him from the distant depot.

After calmly accepting the enthusiastic congratulations of the passengers who had witnessed his dramatic boarding of the train, Waring dropped into a seat with a sigh of relief, and was soon lost in thought. He was roused from his revery by a touch on the arm, and turned to find the conductor standing beside him. The sight of that official reminded him of the necessity of paying fare, and he reached into his pocket for the required cash. His fingers encountered nothing more valuable than a knife and some matches. The other pockets were equally unproductive. Then he remembered, with a shock, that he had put his money in the little bundle, at that moment firmly attached to his saddle, some miles to the rear.

It was maddening. There was nothing to do but throw himself on the mercy of the man in the blue uniform. That person heard his excuses with an impassive face, and merely announced that he would have to get off at the next station. This was not at all in accordance with Waring's plans, and he endeavored to impress upon the conductor the importance of his being in Denver that evening. He might as well have addressed the Sphinx, so far as any effect his words had on the official, who said in answer to his entreaties:

"I'd lose my job if I let you ride free. You'll have to get off. It's only ten miles back to Empire, and if you left your money on

your saddle, you can soon get it again, that is, if no one has swiped it before you get there."

Waring grew desperate. Was his ride after all to be fruitless? He remembered his reason for haste, and decided to take the conductor into his confidence. Leaning over, he whispered something quickly into his ear, and ended by showing him the postal card. At first the man looked incredulous, but a glance at Waring's earnest face reassured him. His expression softened, and he handed back the card with a sigh.

"I reckon I'll have to fix it for you, but the only way I can do it is to pay your fare out of my own pocket. I'll do that, and you can send me the money. It's three-sixty." He wrote his name and address upon a slip, which he gave to Waring, together with a cash receipt ticket, unheeding the latter's impulsive thanks.

This occurrence reminded Waring of similar difficulties to be overcome in Denver, and he did some hard, rapid thinking as he was being whirled down through Clear Creek Cañon, but by the time the train shot past Table Mountain and out to the plain, his face bore a confident smile. The postal card had served him well thus far; perhaps its mission was not yet ended.

The car wheels were still turning when he strode through the big station, jumped into a carriage, and was driven to the nearest drug store, where he consulted a directory.

"Number nine hundred South Seventeenth Street," he cried, as he re-entered the vehicle. Arriving at his destination, he sprang out and, saying "Wait," ran up the steps of a palatial residence.

To the dignified butler who opened the door, he said: "I wish to see Mr. Foster. My name is Waring. I haven't a card with me."

Instinctively perceiving the gentleman beneath the rough flannel shirt and mud-covered "chaps," the servant politely ushered him into the reception room, saying that he would see if Mr. Foster was in. Apparently he was, for he appeared almost immediately, the personification of keen-eyed, well-groomed finance.

"What can I do for you, Mr.—er—Waring?"

That young man took in every detail of his appearance, and he realized that he had a hard-headed man of business to deal with.

"Mr. Foster," he said, "you are the president of the Denver

National Bank, which, I believe, handles the Western interests of the Second National Bank of Boston?"

The other bowed, and Waring continued:

"I have an account at the Second, and I want you to cash a check for me. It is after banking hours I know, and even if it were not, I have no immediate means of identification."

The banker's features stiffened perceptibly, but Waring went on:

"It is of the greatest importance that I take the eastern express to-night, or I would not come to you in this irregular way—"

"One moment, Mr. Waring. Pardon me for interrupting you, but it will save your time as well as my own if I say that what you ask is impossible, as you should know. My advice to you is to wire your bank for the money."

Waring broke in impatiently:

"Of course I know that I can do that, but it means a day's delay, and that is what I want to avoid. See here, Mr. Foster, I am willing to pay any amount within reason for the accommodation if you will oblige me."

The president began to look suspicious: "It must be a very urgent matter that requires such haste," he said sarcastically. "Really, Mr. Waring, I must positively decline to do anything for you."

"It *is* an urgent matter," cried Waring. "I was about to explain it to you," and he went on and told of the postal card and its purport, adding a brief account of his efforts to get to the city in time to take the train that night.

"Let me see the card," said the banker. His voice had taken on a different inflection. Waring handed him the bit of pasteboard that had played such an important part in his adventures.

"From what is it taken, did you say?" Upon hearing the answer he left the room, to return in a few minutes with a rather bulky musical score, which he laid upon the table, and turned the pages until he found what he sought. Carefully he compared the music on the card with that of the printed sheet. Then, turning to the younger man, he said in a kindly voice:

"I will assist you, Mr. Waring. It will, of course, be a purely personal accommodation, as it is contrary to all my business methods, but I cannot resist such an appeal as this. Also, I con-

sider myself a good judge of faces, and I feel safe in trusting yours. What amount do you require?"

Waring, beaming with joy, replied, "A hundred dollars will be sufficient," and the banker motioned towards a desk.

"Make your check for a hundred and fifty. You will need that, unless you care to travel in your present costume."

The banker exchanged it for a check for a like amount, saying:

"You can cash this at the Brown Palace Hotel. I will 'phone the cashier, so you will have no trouble."

Waring tried to thank him, but he would not listen.

"You are perfectly welcome, my boy. I am glad to be able to help you. I envy you, with all my heart. I would give half of all I own to be in your position," and his voice trembled a little. "You have my best wishes for a pleasant journey. Good-bye." A cordial hand grasp, and Waring ran down the steps, and ten minutes later, these words were speeding over the wire:

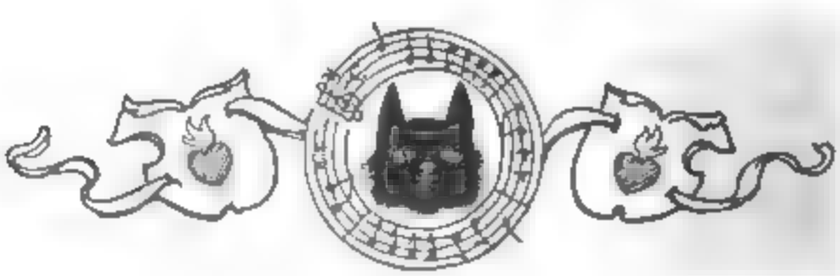
"Postal received. Arrive Boston Friday night. See Luke i. 13.—Jack"

When the Chicago Limited pulled out of Denver that evening, John Talbot Waring, clean shaved, and attired in garments of the most approved cut, was standing on the rear platform of the last Pullman, softly humming a fragment from the great oratorio, "The Messiah." There was a tender light in his eyes as he gazed at a postal card he held in his hand. And the words he sang were:

For unto us a child is born;
Unto us a son is given.

At the same moment, two thousand miles away in the East, a pale young wife was holding a telegram close to her lips. An open Bible lay on the bed beside her. Turning softly on her pillows, she glanced lovingly at the dainty cradle, and whispered:

Thou shalt call his name John.



"CATECHISMS"

Hand to Mouth Hints for those who thirst for the Milk of Human Kindness, and Heart to Heart Talks that will lead them from the Wrong Road into the Right Path.

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Will you please tell me where my shoulders are? In ordering a coming-out gown I stipulated that it should disclose them. Now it is cut very low in front but has sleeves extending from the neck half way to the elbow, and the dressmaker not only insists that it is what I ordered but threatens to sue me. Am I right in refusing to pay?

DEBUTANTE.

You are wrong. While a man's shoulders are located under his ears those of a debutante in the best society are below her chin. When the country was young this was different, but there has been a change of front, and when one reads nowadays that "a capital V-shaped corsage displayed a pair of superb white shoulders" it doesn't follow that even a vestige of shoulders such as mother used to wear is disclosed. If your dressmaker understands her business she knows whether yours should be worn rampant or under cover.

Can one, in writing a tale of love, portray in one brief sentence Emotion, Atmosphere, and Local Color? If so, will you favor our Ladies' Literary League by quoting such a sentence from some classic. ROBERTA.

Sure one can. On page 43 of "Another Three Weeks" (Life Publishing Co., New York), is this sentence, which answers your question.

> "A wave of motherly tenderness swept over her face and she pulled Paul's head down on her shoulder like a tigress clawing a haunch of raw horse meat."

Here you have "she" for emotion, Paul's head for atmosphere, and raw horse meat for local color.

What does one do in the best society in a case like this? Last week mamma, who is rather stout and somewhat nearsighted, called on a prominent lady to solicit aid for foreign missions. In seating herself while being announced she heard a squeaking noise which she supposed came from the sofa springs. Not until it was too late did she find that she sat upon and smothered a pet poodle who lay there asleep. She came straight home feeling as if she had committed a crime and as yet we don't know what the outcome will be. FANNIE.

In good society the intention constitutes the crime. For example, if it is the intention of a person in the exclusive set to pay a bill then the bill is considered paid. As it was not the intention of your mamma to sit upon the poodle, the poodle still lives. Although physically smothered he technically slumbers. It is of course also possible that he wasn't very well and would have died anyway. The outcome depends upon what your mamma did with the remains. In good society one usually deposits these under the sofa or carries them off in the muff or coat, unobserved, to prevent a sudden shock to the owner.

When bathing at the seashore may I dive with my gentleman escort while the chaperon watches on the beach? If so, how long may we remain under water? BIRDIE.

You may take turns in diving, but in the best society you cannot dive together unless your chaperon accompanies you. Should your escort propose a different arrangement you must smilingly but firmly say that you will remain on deck to summon help in case he is lost

My papa's trousers bulge out at the knees. As he is very short and stout this embarrasses us when we have fashionable callers. Is it the fault of the tailor or What? HELOISE.

It is the fault of What In other words, your papa makes the mistake so common among careless men of sitting too much and keeping his feet on the floor while seated This causes the unsightly bulge In refined society a gentleman stands up and when forced to a seat he reclines at full length by resting his feet on a table, window sill, or chair, thus preserving the graceful lines of his garments.

In the New York society news one frequently reads of "The Statutory Grounds." Does this refer to the Polo Grounds and where are they? LULU.

No. They are located in the midst of the best society.

For years I have longed for a literary career but dreaded entering upon it from fear of catching the writers' cramp. My papa conducts a large dairy and poultry farm and I shall dearly appreciate your advice. GERALDINE.

Carefully follow these instructions and all will be well At sunrise milk four cows daily for eight months and then eight daily for four months, being careful to employ all your fingers without injury to the cows After sunset dry pluck a sufficient number of fowls to banish all fear of the writers' cramp. Two hours spent daily at the piano in mastering Czerny's Exercises will hasten the cure.

For ever so long I have experienced a severe thirst, which increases with the approach of the warm season. What shall I do? THEODORE.

With many persons thirst is purely a matter of the imagination and will yield to Christian Science treatment if this be supplemented at each meal by a stein of the Kind that made Milwaukee famous and another between meals.* When the thirst is not due to the imagination the supplementary treatment may be used exclusively.

*Also one before retiring.

Personal

If you have not yet accepted our special offer to mail to you or some friend The Black Cat for **two full years at the price of one** you must send your dollar before July 15 or you will be too late.

Pulling for the Shore!

One of Uncle Sam's Navy Boys was given up by the doctor.

His stomach would not retain food or medicine, until a mess-mate suggested

Grape-Nuts

On this world-famed food and milk he gained about 40 lbs. in four months and got well.

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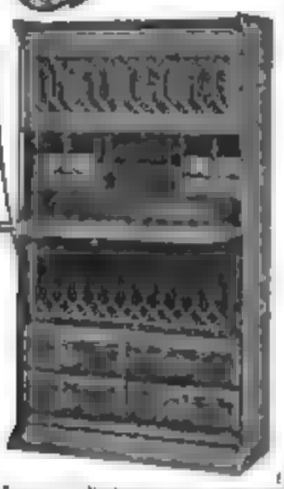

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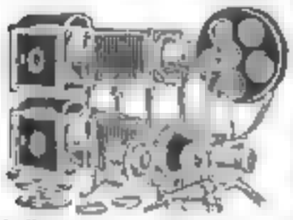

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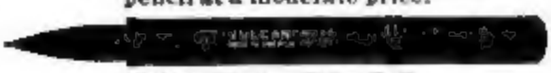

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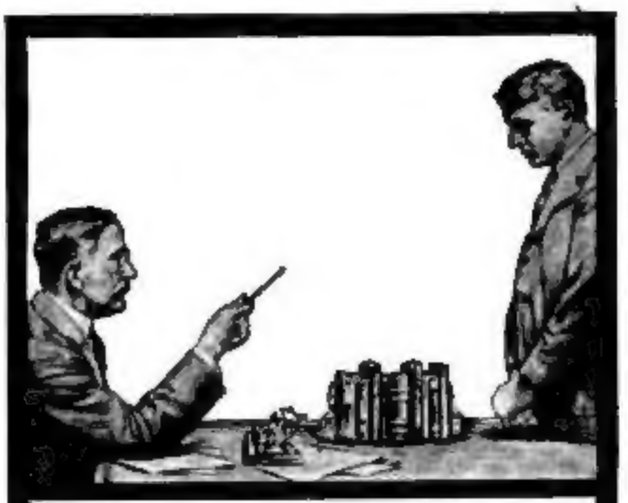

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The Black Cat

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